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AMERICAN SPEECH

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¶ CHARLTON LAIRD, Professor and Head of the Department of English, University of Nevada, is a specialist in Anglo-Norman and Middle English literary relationships, particularly as they concern Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne*. His article on Noah Webster's Anglo-Saxon studies, printed in this issue, was written while he was at Yale as a Special Research Fellow in 1944-1945. A thesaurus of synonyms, based upon new principles, is now, he tells us, in proof and will be published before the end of the year. ¶ CHARLES H. LIVINGSTON is Professor of Modern Languages in Bowdoin College. 'American English "Flunk" ' is his first contribution to *American Speech,* but he has published elsewhere many similar articles on Anglo-French etymologies. ¶ In this issue M. M. MATHEWS gives us another selection from the materials which he has been gathering for his forthcoming *Dictionary of Americanisms.* He hopes to finish the editing of this book by the end of the year. ¶ L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP, whose 'Pronunciation of Upstate New York Place-Names' appeared in *American Speech* for December, 1944, is now out of the Navy and back at free-lance literary work; at present he is writing a book on magic and witchcraft. ¶ As his article tells us, FRED EIKEL, JR., taught for some time at Texas A. and M. College. He is now Instructor in English at the University of Texas. ¶ In this issue we present an article on rhyming slang by SIR ST VINCENT TROUBRIDGE, whose notes on the *DAE* have appeared in *American Speech* for October, 1944 (p. 211), and December, 1944.

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AMERICAN SPEECH

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ETYMOLOGY, ANGLO-SAXON, AND NOAH WEBSTER

CHARLTON LAIRD
University of Nevada

OF ALL Noah Webster's causes, from the systematization of epidemiology to the depreciation of milliner's feathers and 'frippery of the head,' none was dearer to him than was the pursuit of etymologies, and in nothing so much as in his vast synopsis of 'language affinities,' perhaps, did he repose his hope for the gratitude and admiration of Posterity. In his etymological powers he trusted to the last. He was more than eighty when he asserted:

> The process of tracing words to their primary sense, and from that sense deducing the secondary significations and terms to express them is probably *new*. I know of no author who has attempted it with any success. In this branch of etymology, even the German scholars, the most accurate philologists in Europe, appear to be wholly deficient. To this investigation I devoted about ten years, and my reward is ample.[1]

Still later he defended his etymological achievements as follows:

> But to trace words up to their origin, and show their primary or radical signification; to ascertain the origin of a great number of English words derived from other languages, and explain the physical actions or properties from which abstract and moral ideas have received their names: *hic labor, hoc opus est.* In this department of etymology, all European books which I have seen are most miserably deficient. Indeed, this may be considered a *new subject.* . . . The plan of my researches on that subject is new; and it has led me into an unexplored field. By devoting ten years to the comparison of radical words in twenty different languages, I have been able to discover some principles not before known, and to illustrate the origin and meaning of many words which had been wholly unknown or imperfectly understood.[2]

1. Noah Webster, *Observations on Language, and on the Errors of Classbooks: addressed to the Members of the New York Lyceum. Also Observations on Commerce, Addressed to the Members of the Mercantile Library Association, in New York* (New Haven, 1839), pp. 5-6.

2. Noah Webster, 'State of English Philology,' in *Commendations of Dr. N. Webster's Books* (New Haven? 1841?). The article contains a reply to attacks upon Webster in connection with Richardson's dictionary of 1839, and the pamphlet reprints letters dated 1840. The whole was presumably published as publicity for the octavo issue of the *American Dictionary,* printed 1840-41. Curiously, the passage here cited was not reprinted when the essay was included in *A Collection of Papers on Political, Literary and Moral Subjects* (New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, 1843), pp. 338-373.

This concept, that one derives meanings and usages by 'the process of tracing words to their primary sense, and from that sense deducing the secondary significations and terms to express them,' implicit in much of Webster's writing, finds an echo in the introduction with which he dedicated his great work to the public, where he writes as follows:

> This Dictionary, like all others of the kind, must be left, in some degree, imperfect; for what individual is competent to trace to their source, and define in all their various applications, popular, scientific and technical, *seventy* or *eighty thousand* words![3]

Etymology and definition, in Webster's view, were twin foundations of lexicography and of his dictionary, although an examination of the dictionary itself provides evidence that he did not make the practical use of etymology for semantics which his theory would imply. Still, he did use it extensively, and he never failed to insist upon its importance, nor ever tired of pursuing it for his own satisfaction. To Webster's definitions, Posterity accorded all praise, but the etymologies received less cordial reception. Conscientious editors like Professor Chauncey A. Goodrich and Dr. Noah Porter, in revising what the author had called 'the Dictionary,' felt obliged quietly to remove great numbers of Webster's etymological surmises. Even sympathetic subsequent critics—Webster's contemporary critics were not always sympathetic—found his most original work the least defensible.[4] Any etymologist who endeavored to divide the languages of the civilized world into Hamitic and Japhitic from Ham and Japheth would inevitably encounter difficulty, but when that same etymologist persistently ridiculed almost all other etymologists and 'their very whimsical mistakes,' he was encouraging no considerate reception for his own guess that the American *woodchuck* came from the

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3. *An American Dictionary of the English Language: Intended to Exhibit, I. The Origin, Affinities and Primary Signification of English Words, as far as They have been Ascertained. II. The Genuine Orthography and Pronunciation of Words, According to General Usage, or to Just Principles of Analogy. III. Accurate and Discriminating Definitions, with Numerous Authorities and Illustrations. To which are Prefixed, An Introductory Dissertation on the Origin, History and Connection of the Languages of Western Asia and of Europe, and a Concise Grammar of the English Language* (New York, 1828), 2 vols. I shall cite the first octavo edition (New Haven, 1841), with a similar but somewhat more elaborate title page, since the introduction is paged; in this printing the Preface closes at I, viii.

4. Horace E. Scudder, *Noah Webster* (Boston, 1882), pp. 258-260; James A. H. Murray, *The Evolution of English Lexicography* (Oxford, 1900), p. 43; F. Sturges Allen, *Noah Webster's Place among English Lexicographers* (Springfield, Mass., 1909), pp. 10-11, 13; George Philip Krapp, *The English Language in America* (New York, 1925), I, 363, 365; M. M. Mathews, *A Survey of English Dictionaries* (London, 1933), pp. 41-42; Allen Walker Read, 'The Philological Society of New York,' *American Speech*, IX (1934), 132; Ervin C. Shoemaker, *Noah Webster, Pioneer of Learning* (New York, 1936), pp. 234-235; Harry R. Warfel, *Noah Webster, Schoolmaster to America* (New York, 1936), pp. 349-350.

Zend word for 'pig,'[5] his speculation whether *Minerva* was to be derived from English *man* or German *Arbeit*,[6] or his identification of the aboriginal inhabitants of Gaul, in the course of which he trusts that the *Dodanim* of Genesis x, 4, is an error for *Rhodanim*, 'evidently the Hebrew plural of *Rhodan*, the original name, whence Rhone, in France.'[7] Accordingly, his *Synopsis of the principal Words in twenty Languages, arranged in Classes, under their primary Elements or Letters*[8] has remained unprinted, and his kindest critics are those who have pointed to his belief in the comparative method, and to his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and other Teutonic languages. No one seems seriously to have asked, however, how much Webster knew of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English. Professor Krapp implies that he may not have known much,[9] but does not press the point. Dr. Read notices that in 1788 Webster derived *devil* from *the evil*, but adds, 'He learned more Anglo-Saxon in later years, and in the dictionary of 1828 gave the true etymology for *devil*.'[10] Professor Warfel, in the best biography of Webster, seems to suppose that the lexicographer made a careful study of Germanic languages, especially Anglo-Saxon, and that these independent researches were of great importance in the formulation of Webster's etymological beliefs. He asserts that 'With characteristic scholarly energy he [Webster] studied, as far as American libraries could supply him with books, Anglo-Saxon, Chaucerian Middle English, Danish, and German.'[11] Later he accounts for the withdrawal of the grammar by the fact that 'a study of Anglo-Saxon had unfolded new principles . . .'[12] and points out further that Webster 'learned German, Danish, and Anglo-Saxon in order to trace the relationship between English and its ancestors.'[13] Admittedly, many of his twenty languages Webster knew only as one who had walked about a semicircular table, endeavoring to ascertain from dictionaries whether or not the consonants in the Ethiopic word for 'hen' resemble the consonants in what he called Hyberne (Irish),[14] but he himself gives us reason to

5. *American Dictionary*, under *Chuck;* this was one of Webster's favorite discoveries, and he mentioned it repeatedly in lectures and prefaces.

6. *Ibid.*, I, lxiv, col. 1.

7. *State of English Philology*, p. 12.

8. The manuscript is in the New York Public Library.

9. *Op. cit.*, I, 364-365.

10. *Op. cit.*, p. 132, n. 9.

11. *Op. cit.*, p. 127.

12. *Op. cit.*, p. 306.

13. *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

14. In statements which must represent one of those lapses from precision of which we are all guilty, Professor Warfel says Webster 'mastered' these twenty languages; cf. pp. 348, 350. Webster says he 'made a synopsis.' Cf. Emily Ellsworth Fowler Ford and Emily Ellsworth Ford Skeel, *Notes on the Life of Noah Webster* (New York, 1912), II, 162.

suppose that he attached unusual importance to his study of Anglo-Saxon. In the course of defending himself from an attack by the publisher of Richardson's dictionary, he printed the following paragraph:

> The prospectus further asserts, that 'Dr. Webster was entirely unacquainted with our old authors.' This is untrue; I had been for forty years acquainted with some of the best of the old authors; but I never found any use in consulting them, except in illustrating three or four words. And I go further and affirm, that scarcely one of the early writers, anterior to the age of Spenser, is worth reading, except for gratifying the curiosity of an antiquary. I took a better course; I applied myself to examine our mother-tongue, in the Anglo-Saxon authors, and from them derived essential benefit.[15]

A number of questions might give one pause here. First, one might notice that when Webster says he 'traced' an etymology, he is not using the word *trace* as he himself defined it in 'the Dictionary,' 'to follow by footsteps or tracks' and thus to pursue a word from contemporary times through Modern English and Middle English to its source. He had no use for Middle English. In this, of course, he was to a degree discrediting a competitor, since Richardson had made good use of Chaucer, Gower, Wiclif, Robert Mannyng, Robert of Gloucester, and *Piers Plowman,* but he was also stating a simple fact. He 'found no use' for Middle English because he was not tracing words. He was searching for roots wherever he could find them, and he attached importance to Anglo-Saxon because it was the form of English nearest to the primitive language, and because he supposed that the related Gothic had come from the plain of Chaldee itself.[16] But did he command an intimate knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, and did his original research in that language form the basis to any considerable degree of his etymological beliefs?[17]

For the answer to these questions we have suggestive material, since Webster was an inveterate underliner and scribbler of marginalia, and he gave many of his books to public institutions. The whole question of his familiarity with Anglo-Saxon came to my attention when I chanced to examine an old copy of the Anglo-Saxon version of Orosius in the

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15. *A Collection of Papers,* pp. 338-339.

16. *American Dictionary,* pp. x-xi. He several times revised his opinions; cf. *Dissertations on the English Language: with notes, historical and critical, To which is added, by way of Appendix An essay in a reformed mode of spelling, with Dr. Franklin's arguments on that subject* (Boston, 1789), pp. 40-60, 313-361; also, *passim,* in Webster's briefer treatises on language: 'Observations on Language,' 'State of English Philology,' 'An Enquiry into the Origin of the words Domesday, Parish, Parliament, Peer, Baron; with Remarks New and Interesting,' in *A Collection of Essays and Fugitiv Writings on Moral, Historical, Political and Literary Subjects* (Boston, 1790), pp. 249-303.

17. As to the remaining Germanic languages in his synopsis, he gives but little evidence of a knowledge of Danish, and not much more of a knowledge of German. Some German he knew, but one might hazard a guess that his ignorance of German philological discoveries is traceable in part to difficulty in reading German. Dr. Read clearly doubts that Webster read much German; cf. *op. cit.,* p. 132.

Sterling Library at Yale, and noticed the sort of notes one would expect from a beginning graduate student, except that the script suggested the late eighteenth century; only later did I find that the hand was that of Noah Webster. The volume was but one of four works in Anglo-Saxon which Webster gave in 1837 to his *alma mater;*[18] they seem to permit us to trace the course and estimate the extent of his studies in the language.

Of these books, the early English laws, consisting of Anglo-Saxon and Latin in parallel columns, give no evidence that Webster was interested in the text as a piece of language. There are underlinings and marginalia, but so far as I noticed, these refer only to the Latin version, never to the Anglo-Saxon. They seem not to concern philological questions, but evidence an interest in society and history. Perhaps one might postulate that the book is likely to have come into Webster's hands because of his occupation with the law[19]—he was admitted to the bar in Connecticut and at various times endeavored to live by the practice of law—and that in reading the work he was impelled by his lifelong interest in history.[20] We may presume that from this volume Webster drew the laws which he translated in the Preface to his dictionary,[21] but if he read the laws in the original, he did not leave his customary tracks in this volume.[22]

Of the remaining works, one other has Anglo-Saxon and Latin texts parallel, Gibson's edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,*[23] and in this

18. 'List of books presented by Dr Noah Webster,' Yale MS. vault, Sect. 15, Drawer 2. The following volumes are pertinent to our study: Owen Manning (ed.), *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum, Auctore Edvardo Lye, A.M. Rectore de Yardley-Hastings in Agro Northantoniensi. Accedunt fragmenta versionis Ulphilande, necnon opuscula quaedam Anglo-Saxonica . . .* (Londini, 1772), 2 vols.; David Wilkins, *Leges Anglo-Saxonicae ecclesiasticae & civiles. Accedunt leges Edvardi latinae, Guillelmi Conquestoris Gallo-Normanicae, et Henrici I. latinae. Subjungitur Domini Henr. Spelmanni codex legum veterum statutorum Regni Angliae . . . Toti operi praemittitur dissertatio epistolaris admodum Reverendi Domini Guillelmi Nicolsoni Episcopi Derrensis . . .* (Londini, 1721); Edmund Gibson, *Chronicon Saxonicum. Ex MSS codicibus nunc primum integrum edidit, ac latinum fecit . . .* (Oxford, 1692); Daines Barrington, *The Anglo-Saxon Version, From the Historian Orosius. By Ælfred the Great. Together with an English Translation from the Anglo-Saxon* (London, 1773). Jobe Ludolf, *Lexicon Æthiopico-Latinum . . .* 2nd ed. (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1699) is interesting for Webster's etymological guesses; it contains marginalia.

19. If so, his interest parallels that of Thomas Jefferson, whose concern for Anglo-Saxon laws led him to a study of the language; cf. Albert C. Baugh, 'Thomas Jefferson, Linguistic Liberal,' *Studies for William A. Read. . .* (Louisiana State University, 1940), pp. 90-91.

20. He wrote several texts in history; cf. Ford and Skeel, *op. cit.*, II, 523-536. Many of his lectures and essays and his work on epidemics evince an interest in history.

21. *Op. cit.*, I, xl.

22. We may probably presume that Webster did not own this volume in 1790. In the course of deriving *parish, parliament, peer,* and *baron* from a word which 'in the Gothic or ancient German waz spelt *bar,*' a word which he seems to have gleaned from Camden's *Remains,* he cited an Anglo-Saxon law, but at second hand and in Latin. Cf. *Essays and Fugitiv Writings,* p. 253.

23. Cf. note 18, *supra.*

volume, I believe, we have the record of the manner in which Webster learned Anglo-Saxon. He seems at first ignorant of the elements of Anglo-Saxon grammar, does not recognize common words, and suggests the interests of one who still considers the language quaint. The articles and the relatives trouble him, for instance. In *feng to þam biscopdome* he underlines *þam* and glosses it 'them';[24] this he does again and again, translating *on þam lyfte* as 'them air,' and glossing *of þam londe* with 'them,'[25] and so on, through many pages.[26] Similarly, *þara* is misinterpreted; in *mid ealra þare ȝeȝaderunȝa ealra þara mynstra* both forms of the word are glossed 'their.'[27] On the same page Webster summarizes some of his observations as follows: 'hit is *it the* for which *Other* for *or.*' These are scarcely the observations of a scholar. In *to þan Arb.* [archbishop's] *stol* he glosses *þan* as 'than';[28] *þy winter* is glossed 'the for that,' probably because the Latin has *eadem hyeme.*[29] In *for-diden ealle þa minstre þa hi to comen* he has underlined both occurrences of *þa,* and apparently not understanding that one is a relative, glossed them 'the, those.'[30] Beside *þonne tuwa* he wrote 'than twice.'[31]

Webster was having difficulty, also, with common words and constructions. He seems to have supposed that *fore-becna* is a verb, for in *Her wæron reðe fore-becna cumene ofer Norðan-hymbra land* he glosses the word as 'forebeckon.'[32] *Wæl* he usually misunderstands as 'wail,' as in *wæl-stowe,* glossed 'wail-place,'[33] but *þær þat mæst wæl ȝeslozon* is glossed 'most deal.'[34] Beside *& adruncen on ȝehwæþere hond* he wrote 'drown from drunk';[35] he glossed a form of 'one' in *ymb ænne monað* as 'any,'[36] and he glossed the past participle in *& þær ȝehorsude wurdon* as 'horsemen.'[37] He makes *þrittiga sum* into 'some thirty,'[38] and *buton him anum*

24. *Op. cit.,* p. 50.
25. Pp. 65-66.
26. For instance, *eallum þam rice* is glossed 'all them,' p. 78, and on the same page in *wiþ þam fryðe. And under þam fryðe & þam feoh ȝehate,* each appearance of the word is glossed 'them.' On p. 37, *þam herize,* and on p. 83, *mid sumum þam here* are glossed 'them army.'
27. P. 67. This error, also, continues; on p. 86 *þara scipa* is glossed 'their,' but on the next page he correctly glosses *to hiora scipa* with 'their.' To the end of the volume he is puzzling about this word, and on p. 221 glosses *þære cwen* as 'there queen' and *þær eorlas dohter* with 'their for the.'
28. P. 72.
29. P. 80.
30. *Ibid.*
31. P. 92.
32. P. 65.
33. Pp. 78, 127, etc.
34. P. 75.
35. P. 76.
36. P. 82.
37. P. 78.
38. P. 85.

into 'him one.'[39] He regularly renders *sige* as 'siege.'[40] As he proceeds errors of this sort become fewer, but by p. 120, beside *abbot of þe sylfe mynstre* he wrote 'self-monastery' as though these words were a hyphenated noun; on p. 126, in the statement that *man ȝerædde þæt man ȝeald ærest ȝafol Deniscan mannum* he glossed *man ȝeald* as 'man gold,' perhaps because the Latin has 'tributum.' On p. 134 he understands the meaning of *mycla hungor ȝeond Angel-cynn* (one should remember that he always had the Latin if he was in doubt), but *ȝeond* is underlined and glossed, 'gone for throughout.' He could still translate *þam ȝafol ȝyldan* as 'gavel gild,'[41] and he seems to have misunderstood *þes þe us bec secȝað* when he wrote beside it 'us book.'[42] At p. 209, given the following passage, *& loc hweðer þæra ȝebroðra oðerne ofer-bide* he could still write 'whether there brothers other over-abide'; perhaps by this time he was sufficiently confident to forsake the Latin, for the passage is correctly translated on the opposite page, 'utque è fratribus is qui alteri esset superstes.'[43]

So much for the *Chronicle;* there remains one text, the Anglo-Saxon translation of Orosius, followed by a translation into modern English which is not printed parallel.[44] Here Webster shows more competence; he even corrects occasional errors in the translation; usually these are conventional slips, the typographical error of 533 for 633,[45] the writing of *Nile* for *Rhine,*[46] the omission of a word,[47] or a needlessly general rendition,[48] but there is occasional evidence that Webster can now translate simple prose rather accurately. He notices that *heora mæstan burh* should be 'to their greatest city,' not 'most of the cities';[49] that *ymbe twelf monað* should be 'about the twelvth month,' not 'every twelve months';[50] and that *æȝþer ȝe . . . ȝe* should be translated 'both . . . and,' not 'either . . .

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39. P. 89.
40. Pp. 68, 70, etc.
41. P. 136.
42. P. 137.
43. As a sample I will print all the glosses on p. 66; they are somewhat more numerous than the glosses for an average page. They are as follows: *of þam londe,* glossed 'them'; *þam wæs oðer nama nemned Præn,* in which *þam* is glossed 'to them, i.e. him'; *sume þurh ofer-weder wurdon to-brocene,* glossed 'sum over-wether were broken'; *& Ecȝferðes-mynster æt þone muþe berefodon,* glossed 'those mouth bereaved'; *han-cred* glossed 'hencrow'; *to his cine-stole ahofen* glossed 'King-stool hove'; *ȝebundene* glossed 'bound.' There are few blunders here, but the material would probably not interest an accomplished student of Anglo-Saxon.
44. Note 18, *supra.*
45. P. 155 of the text, p. 152 of the translation.
46. P. 19 of the text, p. 7 of the translation.
47. P. 22 of the text, p. 11 of the translation.
48. P. 108 of the text, p. 102 of the translation; p. 75 of the text, p. 67 of the translation.
49. P. 98 of the text, p. 91 of the translation.
50. P. 47 of the text, p. 37 of the translation.

or.'[51] Accordingly, one might ask how expert Webster became in Anglo-Saxon. The last gloss in the book, *'learned* for *taught,'*[52] appears beside *ac lærde þone oðerne.* Apparently, Webster could not yet distinguish between *læran* and *leornian,* although the words were properly defined in his dictionary.[53] Most of the marginalia here are cross-references, and many of the underlinings serve merely to call attention to the occurrence of a word. He is still checking *þær* and *swa,* and the few new words that interest him do not show any profound probing into the structure of the language. His curiosity concerning *þa* leads him to gloss *þa tida*[54] as 'they times' and to write 'they' beside the *þa* in *& ealle þa yldestan menn;*[55] on the same page he underlines a *þa* which does mean 'they,' and glosses another 'the' as though he were just discovering that the one form could be used for both. The *þa* is involved, also, in a whole series of underlinings in the following passage: *Þa ȝit þa Alexander ham com to Babylonia. þa ȝit þær on him se mæsta þurst mannes blodes: Ac þa þa his ȝeferan onȝeatan þat he þæs ȝewinnes þa ȝeswican nolde.*[56] He underlines *þa ȝit þa, þa ȝit,* and *þa þa,* and writes in the margin, *'that get* for *when* that that for when.'[57]

There remains one work to be considered, Canon Manning's revision of Lye's Anglo-Saxon and Gothic dictionary,[58] a remarkable work for its day. From it Webster could have learned much that he seems not to have known. So far as one can observe he made no use of the Gothic portions of the dictionary at all, in spite of the importance which he attached to that language. Occasionally he jotted marginal references to Orosius or to the *Chronicle.* He made a few marks in the grammatical introduction, but restricted his notes to elementary matters, and about these he was sometimes confused. He marked the paradigms for the present tense of

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51. P. 20 of the text, p. 9 of the translation. He made minor corrections also at pp. 67, 93, 102, 146, and 214 of the text.

52. P. 239.

53. Cf. note 18, *supra.*

54. P. 177.

55. P. 163.

56. P. 116.

57. Webster's confusion of *ȝit* (yet) with *ȝit* (get) presumably stems from his devotion to John Horne Tooke's *Epea Pteroenta, or, the Diversions of Purley,* Part I (London, 1786), to which I shall return. There was a second edition (London, 1798-1805), from which an American edition was printed (Philadelphia, 1806-07), but Webster must have used the first edition, for he based the fourth of his *Dissertations on the English Language* of 1789 upon Tooke, and he cites Tooke in *A Letter to the Governors, Instructors and Trustees of the Universities and other Seminaries of Learning in the United States, on the Errors of English Grammars* (New York, 1798), p. 22. Had Webster used the second edition, enlarged with illustrative material from medieval authors, he might have had greater respect for Middle English.

58. Cf. note 18, *supra.*

the verb *to be* and for the article; beside the latter he wrote 'tham nominative' with a reference to 'Oros. 76,' which refers again to p. 117. At that point occurs the following passage, with the *þam* underlined: *nu wenað hy hu þam wære þe on Alexandres walde wæran.* In this passage, of course, *þam* is not an article at all. Thus the dictionary testifies that Webster used the book as a beginner; if he ever used it for any serious work in Anglo-Saxon, he left none of his customary marginalia.

This, then, is the evidence of the books which Webster bequeathed to Yale. They testify that he made a serious effort to learn Anglo-Saxon; that he examined the texts critically, comparing one with another, noticing grammatical structures which appealed to him as strange and significant; and that he had an eye for words revealing of etymology. The books do not permit us to assume that Webster had extensive knowledge of the language, or any deep understanding of it. Certainly, they do not support Professor Warfel's generous statement that 'he studied, as far as American libraries could supply him with books, Anglo-Saxon. . . .'[59] He seems, on the contrary, to have been far from exhausting the facilities of his private library, having gone through two texts but once, neglected the most difficult, and used his excellent dictionary but scantily. So far as these books provide evidence, he is to be compared rather unfavorably with Thomas Jefferson, for instance, both in his knowledge of the language and in his scholarly concern to keep abreast of the subject.[60] He is not to be compared, on the basis of this evidence, with the best British students of Anglo-Saxon in his day.

But do the marginalia in these works reflect the extent of Noah Webster's knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, or do they trace his preliminary acquaintance with a subject which he advanced elsewhere? Evidence of further competence in Anglo-Saxon does not now come readily to light, but as a matter of course one can never say that further evidence did not exist. One might, however, construct a plausible hypothesis that the notes in these four books do reflect the state of Webster's knowledge of Anglo-Saxon.

One might assume with some reason that Webster conducted most of his pursuit of Anglo-Saxon in his own home, and that these four volumes may well have been his only books on the subject. He seems not to have studied Anglo-Saxon prior to his removal to New Haven in 1798; his previous lectures and essays suggest that his Anglo-Saxon is secondhand. He certainly had studied Anglo-Saxon before he became deeply engrossed

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59. *Op. cit.*, p. 127.
60. Baugh, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

in the actual making of his dictionary. The intervening years were spent largely in New Haven and in Amherst, where I find no other books in the libraries which suggest that Webster was furthering his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon. It is unlikely that, being in need of money as he was almost constantly, he traveled far to consult works on a subject until he had exhausted his own volumes. That Webster took up the study of Anglo-Saxon later in Cambridge is quite possible, but one may well doubt that he there undertook any serious study. He was, at that time, an old man, striving to finish the book before death cut him off, and I find no evidence in his later writings that he felt he had recently begun any new linguistic researches. He refers always to his studies during the inception of the dictionary and during the early years of his work upon it. He had gone to England, not to prepare for his great work, but to add the finishing touches to it; one may doubt that he would at such a time return to a prolonged study of Anglo-Saxon, in which he had for years considered himself competent. Furthermore, one may reasonably suppose he owned no other Anglo-Saxon books. His known bequests make clear that he distributed books with consideration for the recipient.[61] Yale was his *alma mater,* and he relied upon its philologists more than upon any other group when he needed recommendations for his dictionaries;[62] what more natural than that he deposit there his scholarly works in language?[63] His gifts to Harvard University, Union College, Middlebury College, and Amherst College seem not to have included works in Anglo-Saxon.[64] One might notice further that these works presume one another, but do not refer to any other volumes. The dictionary contains cross-references to Orosius and the *Chronicle;* the *Chronicle* contains cross-references to Orosius, and Orosius to the *Chronicle.* In none of them did I notice references to other works. When Webster provided samples of Anglo-Saxon in the introduction to his dictionary,

61. Ford and Skeel, *op. cit.,* II, 519-520.

62. *Commendations of Dr. N. Webster's Books,* p. 3.

63. His bequest included also Ethiopic, Norman, Dutch, and Danish dictionaries, several more usual lexicons and grammars, and a few linguistic studies; cf. Yale MS. vault, Sect. 15, Drawer 2.

64. Ford and Skeel, II, 519-520. Webster gave two etymological dictionaries to Amherst: Stephen Skinner, *Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae, seu explicatio vocum Anglicarum etymologica ex propriis fontibus* . . . (London, 1671); and Franciscus Junius, *Etymologicum Anglicanum. ex autographo descripsit & accessionibus permultis auctum edidit Edwardus Lye* . . . (Oxford, 1743). Webster made a few notes, including animadversions on passages in the introductions, but neither volume has been sufficiently used to account for its being consistently employed in the making of a dictionary. I am indebted to Mr. Newton F. McKeon, Director of the Converse Memorial Library, for his kindness, and for supplying me with a list of Webster's gifts to the library. I am indebted also to the staffs of the libraries at Middlebury, Union, and Harvard for reports concerning Webster's benefactions.

he quoted from these two texts and from the Anglo-Saxon laws, his remaining volume.[65] Thus we have no reason to suppose that when Webster undertook the study of Anglo-Saxon, he had any other than these four volumes at his disposal.[66]

One might ask further, whether the marginalia which we have been examining seem to account for the published evidence of Webster's interest in Anglo-Saxon. One can say with some confidence that after the first edition of his dictionary in 1828 Webster did not embark upon any extensive revision of his etymologies on the basis of a study of Anglo-Saxon. The edition of 1841 shows no marked evidence of corrections of this sort, and the interleaved copy of that edition in the New York Public Library, having notes by Noah Webster and William G. Webster for a second revision, likewise evidences no unusual interest in Anglo-Saxon.[67] To determine in detail the source of the Anglo-Saxon in Webster's first edition would require an elaborate study, but to compare the marginalia with the assertions which seem to have appealed most to Webster is not difficult, since he repeated these again and again, in texts, in prefaces, and in discussions of language. Some of his theories did not involve Anglo-Saxon to a large degree; for instance, that languages should be divided on the testimony of Genesis. The most important of those tenets which seem to rest upon Anglo-Saxon is his belief that language springs from verbs, and that this thesis can be proved by connectives which are palpably verb forms, especially imperative verbs. He proposes, as an example, 'If my horse is not lame, I will ride,' and proceeds as follows:

> The word *if* is known for certainty to be a contraction from *give,* as four centuries ago it was generally written *gif* or *yeve,* the imperative mode. The foregoing sentence then consists of three distinct affirmations:—'Give; my horse is not lame; I will ride.' This is no fancy of mine or Mr. Tooke. It is the *fact;* such is the original structure of the sentence. The first word *give* is a verb in the imperative mode—the following words, *my horse is not lame,* stand as the accusative or objective case after give. . . .[68]

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65. *An American Dictionary,* I, xl.

66. Earlier, Webster had cited 'Bishop Hickes, in his Saxon Grammar, which is a vast treasure of valuable learning,' quoting the paradigm for a noun and the famous passage concerning the study of French and uplandish men, which Trevisa had adapted from Higden; cf. *Dissertations on Language,* pp. 356-360. This is presumably George Hickes, *Grammatica anglo-saxonica ex Hickesiano Linguarum Septentrionalium Thesauro excerpto* (Oxford, 1711) rather than *Institutiones grammaticae anglo-saxonicae, et moesogothicae* . . . (Oxford, 1689). I find no marginal references to Hickes, nor other evidence that Webster had intimate acquaintance with the volume when he was studying Anglo-Saxon. Late in life he examined Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon dictionary; cf. *A Collection of Papers,* pp. 366-367.

67. Professor Warfel suggests that in his later years Webster was not very receptive to new etymological conceptions; *op. cit.,* p. 360.

68. *A Letter to the Governors, Instructors and Trustees of the Universities,* p. 23.

This belief he kept to the end, vigorously repeating it forty-five years later in his last published work.[69] Turning to the marginalia, we find Webster repeatedly glossing a form of *give* as 'if.'[70] But this was no original thought with Webster. As he indicates, he took it from John Horne Tooke, the one writer upon language whom he seems to have admired most of his days.[71] From Tooke comes the etymology of *if* from *give*,[72] of *by* from *beon*,[73] of *with* from *wiðan*,[74] and many more. Doubtless he felt he was adding to Tooke's findings, for soon after one may suppose he studied Anglo-Saxon we see him offering reviewers a suit of clothes 'if they will find a man in Great-Britain or America, who will explain our little word *by* . . .'[75] and Webster frequently glosses *be* in the sense of 'by.'[76] In fact, although Webster certainly read Tooke with a critical mind—his detractors seldom accused him of being without opinions—a reading of the *Diversions of Purley* leaves one with the feeling that here is the source of much of Webster's attitude toward language. One has only to compare 'A Dissertation concerning the Influence of Language on Opinions, and of Opinions on Language,' of 1788,[77] with the *Dissertations on Language* written after Webster's removal to Boston, to feel that a change is coming over his thinking, and that the source of this change may well be Tooke, to whom Webster henceforth refers frequently. In Tooke can be found wholesale criticism of Lowth's approach to grammar, the practice of comparing roots in many languages, great

69. *A Collection of Papers*, pp. 354-355.

70. *Chronicon*, pp. 36, 58, 67, etc.

71. The early references I have noticed are all favorable, but later Webster revised Tooke's theory that language originated with nouns, possibly with nouns and verbs, and asserted that all language began with verbs; cf. Tooke, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-80; Webster, *Dictionary*, I, xxxiv-xxxv; *A Collection of Papers*, p. 366. By 1839, however, he was willing to concede that 'it is a question not yet settled whether *all* other words are not derived from verbs. The *most* of them are certainly thus derived.' Cf. *Observations on Language, and on the Errors of Classbooks; addressed to the Members of the New York Lyceum. Also, Observations in Commerce, Addressed to the Members of the Mercantile Library Association, in New York* (New Haven, 1839), p. 3.

72. *Op. cit.*, pp. 141-144.

73. Pp. 455-458.

74. Pp. 346-352. Probably for this reason in the *Chronicon*, p. 75, beside *wið se cyning* Webster writes 'with, see,' and adds a 'Note' as though this were a discovery, as indeed it would be, if the Anglo-Saxon article came from a verb. *Wiþan* is not recognized by modern lexicographers, but Lye entered it as a verb, considering it part of 'GA-WYÞAN. Conjugare, copulare.' Significantly, beside this last entry in his copy of Lye, Webster has written 'with.' Cf. Lye, *op. cit.*, under *wiþan* and *ga-wiþan*.

75. *A Letter to the Honorable John Pickering, on the Subject of his Vocabulary; or, Collection of Words and Phrases, Supposed to be Peculiar to the United States of America* (Boston, 1817), p. 60.

76. *Chronicon*, pp. 67, 83, 85 (twice), 90, 98, etc.; at p. 43, he notes 'be for are or imper.—am.'

77. *Collection of Essays*, pp. 222-228; Read cites *The American Magazine* (May, 1788), pp. 399-403.

respect for the antiquity of northern languages, belief in the importance of Anglo-Saxon and Gothic, in fact, the apparent source of much of Webster's liberal linguistic approach, for in many respects Tooke was far in advance of his day.[78] One will perhaps be not far wrong if he surmises that Webster undertook the study of Anglo-Saxon because its importance had been made clear to him by Tooke; that in going to Anglo-Saxon he was, in part, seeking confirmation and extension of Tooke's theories;[79] that it was Tooke's *Diversions of Purley* which revolutionized Webster's ideas; that Webster's first-hand study of Anglo-Saxon helped him to expand and to illustrate what he had gained from Tooke; but that his own acquaintance with the language did not provide the basis of any general revolution in his thinking.

Thus, if the evidence we have examined can be taken at something near its face value, we might have an estimate like the following. Webster appreciated that Anglo-Saxon had great importance for the study of the mother tongue, even though he deprecated the study of Middle English. He made an honest effort to learn the language, and did learn to read prose with some facility, although he was far from mastering Anglo-Saxon. His original investigations did not lead him to new and important conclusions, although they did help him to amplify ideas which had grown from his reading of Tooke. In this we have an interpretation not at variance with what we know of Webster as a man. That he undertook the study of Anglo-Saxon when he was perhaps fifty years old, does him credit; that he made amusing blunders is not to be wondered at, especially when one remembers that he was working in a pioneer country, that he was associated with no institution where colleagues could provide him with friendly counsel; but to assume that Webster was more than a mediocre student of Anglo-Saxon is perhaps to accept his professions too credulously.

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78. His reduction of the parts of speech to nouns and verbs, for instance, is suggestive of the modern reliance upon nouns and modifiers.

79. In addition to *if, by,* and *with,* mentioned above, an inordinate proportion of Webster's marginalia concern other prepositions, *against, for, on,* and words of relationship, *-less* for instance, which Tooke discusses.

AMERICAN ENGLISH 'FLUNK'

CHARLES H. LIVINGSTON
Bowdoin College

THE WORD *flunk* was first noted as an American academic slang expression in a text of the beginning of the nineteenth century. The *NED* (IV, 360 c) defines it as follows:

> *Flunk, sb. U. S.* [f. next verb.] 1. A backing out, a total failure, *esp.* in a college examination. 1846 *Yale Banger* . . . 2. 1893 FARMER . . . *Flunk,* an idler, a loafer.
>
> *Flunk, v. U. S.* [*Cf. Flink, Funk.*] 1. *intr.* To give up, back out, fail utterly. Also *to flunk out.* Also quasi-trans. To shirk (a recitation). . . . 1823.
>
> b. *College Slang.* To fail utterly in an examination.
>
> 2. *trans.* To cause to 'flunk'; to pluck.

The etymological dictionaries are cautious in explaining the origin of *flunk* because of its apparent isolation in American English, but all seem to infer with more or less conviction that it may be a variant of *funk.*[1] The *NED* suggests as a possibility its relationship with *funk.*[2] Webster (1934) under *flunk* refers to *funk,* and the *Century Dictionary* says under *flunk:* 'perhaps a variation of *funk.*' Both Webster and the *Century Dictionary* include in their articles definitions of *flunk* which bring it close to *funk* in sense: 'to back out, as from an undertaking, through fear' (Webster); 'to fail or give up; to break down or back down as from incompetence or fear' (*Century*); cf. also *flunk* (*NED*): 'to shirk (a recitation)'; *funk* (*NED*): 'to fight shy of, wish or try to shirk or evade.' These meanings bridge the gap between *flunk* in its academic sense and *funk.*[3]

In a recent article,[4] I have shown that *funk,* although first attested

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1. H. L. Mencken, *The American Language,* 1921, p. 186, citing Louise Pound, says that *flunk* may be a blend or portmanteau word, consisting of a cross between *funk* and *fail,* but he does not include it among the blend-words which may be regarded as certain, such as *cablegram, dumbfound, electrocute,* etc. In the case of *flunk,* this is merely a guess and does not carry conviction.

2. The following are the definitions of *funk* acording to the NED:

Funk, sb.[3] *slang.* [First mentioned as Oxford slang. . . .]

1. Cowering fear; a state of panic or shrinking terror . . . 1743. . . .

2. One who funks; a coward.

Funk, v.[2] [Belongs to *Funk sb.*[3]]

1. *intr.* To flinch or shrink through fear; to 'show the white feather,' try to back out of anything. 1737-9. . . .

2. *trans.* To fight shy of, wish or try to shirk or evade (an undertaking, duty, etc.). Also, *to funk it.*

3. To fear, be afraid of (a person).

4. To frighten or scare.

3. We may also compare the expressions *funk it, flunk it; funk out, flunk out. Flunk out* has been recorded in Connecticut, meaning 'to back out in a cowardly manner'; cf. *Dialect Notes,* III, 1.

4. *Modern Language Notes,* LV (1940), 265 f.

in English as Oxford collegiate slang in the eighteenth century, is an old word and represents an Old French *funicle,* 'wild, mad' (= Lat. **phrenicus).* The form and meaning of *funk* indicate that it came to England early through Western France where variants of related sense, descended from the Old French word, still exist in the patois.

Flunk can be explained phonologically as an old 'variation' of *funk* and may be traced likewise to Old French *funicle,* which may have become **flunique* by metathesis of *l,* and have lost its final unaccented syllable, a normal phenomenon in Anglo-French and in French words borrowed by Middle English. Its subsequent development with loss of *i,* after the shift of accent to the first syllable, would have been the same as that of *funk* under the influence of Middle English accentuation. The metathesis of *l* is not rare in Old French, and the attraction of *l,* in regression from a later syllable to an initial *b, f, p,* may be regarded as a tendency; cf. forms such as Old French *flabe (flabance, flabeeur, flaber)* and Modern Lorraine *flabe* (cf. Italian *fiaba, fiavola*), variants of *fable;* Old French *affluber* (Old Provençal *afliber)* and many similar modern patois forms for *affubler;* Anglo-Norman *flas* for *fals* (L. *falsum),* etc.

Flunk may be then both phonologically and semantically a 'variation' of *funk,* but could it have existed in England without being recorded, and passed out of use there after coming across the Atlantic? Obviously it would be difficult to prove this in the case of *flunk* or other American words whose past existence we cannot point to in English texts or in English dialect dictionaries. But the following cases strengthen the possibility of our supposition. *Haysel* 'haying season' is first attested in England in 1825, but *haysill,* in the same sense and evidently a variant of *haysel,* occurs in American documents as early as 1674. Murray (*NED*) notes only a single case of *stry,* a variant of obsolete *stroy* 'destruction,' in 1825, but *stry* appears in the *Watertown Records* in 1669. If dialect investigators had not noted these rare words, *haysel* and *stry,* in the East Anglian dialect in the nineteenth century, or if these words had gone out of use in East Anglia as late as the eighteenth century, their cases would be identical with that of *flunk* as we have supposed it to be. But here is a closer parallel. The American topographical term *tilsom* is used in the *Hempstead Records* as early as 1661. It is apparently a word of English origin, judging by its termination, but it has not yet been found in any form in England.[5]

5. I have here fully utilized the chapter entitled 'Vocabulary' in *The English Language in America* by G. P. Krapp, New York, 1925, I, 68 f. The author discusses other words of much the same sort: *Folly, bevel, silf (self),* etc.

If *flunk* did pass out of use in England before the nineteenth century, as doubtless many other colloquial and slang expressions of the past did, the fact that it has not been recorded would not be surprising, for the systematic study of dialects and the compilation of regional glossaries and slang dictionaries date from the last century and are still very incomplete. However a trace of *flunk* does exist, I believe, in English *flunkey* (*flunky, flunkie*). Webster shows complete uncertainty regarding the origin of *flunkey* when it says: 'Perhaps fr[om] or akin to *flank*.' The suggestion of the *NED* that it is 'possibly' a diminutive corruption of *flanker,* and the effort of the *Century Dictionary* to connect it with French *flanquer,* are not convincing and depart from phonological principle.

Flunkey (*flunky*), it seems, is a derivative word and implies a primitive *flunk,* just as *funky* is built on *funk, toady* on *toad, goody* on *good,* etc. It is a term of contempt which, in addition to 'a livried servant,' also means 'a cringing flatterer and servile imitator of those above him in rank' (*Century*), 'one who is obsequious or cringing' (Webster), and is 'applied contemptuously to a person who behaves obsequiously to persons above him in rank or position' (*NED*). *Flunkey* is therefore close in sense to *funky,* 'timid, shrinking in fear' (*Century*), 'in a state of "funk," frightened, nervous, timid' (*NED*), and its meaning 'servant in livery' with a contemptuous connotation is an easily explicable development in sense. *Flunkey* has attained a respectable rank in the English vocabulary, although this respectability may be of recent date. *Flunkey,* applied to a ship's steward, is still considered to be slang.[6]

In conclusion, I believe that *flunk* is surely a 'variation' of *funk* and may be traced, like the latter, to Old French *funicle. Flunk,* in a sense related to that of the American English *flunk,* must have existed unrecorded in England as a popular or dialectal expression, just as *funk* had lived for centuries before it was first noted in 1739. *Flunkey* (*flunky*), a derivative of *flunk,* remains to testify to its passing. We have no evidence as to how or when *flunk* crossed the Atlantic.

6. *Flunkey* exists in American English: 'one who fails in an examination, one who flunks or comes to grief'; in Stock Exchange Language: 'an ignorant person who dabbles in financial speculation' (*NED*). Its relation to American English *flunk* is here evident, but *flunkey* turns up mysteriously in the Northwest (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming) in a sense which is not yet listed in the dictionaries and which seems to be related to English *flunkey* rather than to the American word: 'a waiter in a mining and logging camp, assistant to a cook, dishwasher'; cf. *Dialect Notes,* IV, 163, 244; V, 81.

NOTES ON 'AMERICAN SPEECH,' APRIL 1945

M. M. MATHEWS
University of Chicago Press

THE APRIL 1945 *American Speech* was, from my viewpoint, an especially satisfactory number, and I am moved to express my appreciation. Also, with respect to some of the terms dealt with in this issue, I am able to supply a modicum of additional information.

Mr. Hogan's article, 'A Yankee Comments on Texas Speech,' is not only interesting but also filled with Americanisms for which I am delighted to have late examples. *Bud,* meaning brother, *flour mill, Hard-shell Baptist, Lone Star republic, Primitive Baptist,* and *ten gallon hat* are a few examples. All of these are of course common expressions, but it is surprising how difficult it sometimes is to come upon an example in print of such terms. For months I have been on the lookout for a modern example of 'bifocal glasses,' and only yesterday came across one.

Professor Frey's article on the Amish 'Triple-Talk' is interesting and timely. The matter in the footnotes adds to its value. The latest example of *Amish* in the *DAE* is 1904. This article supplies excellent modern examples, not only of this term but also of many others as well, such as *Mennonite, Dunker, Old Order Amish.* Readers of *American Speech* are no doubt acquainted with the fascinating little journal *Der Pennsylvaanisch Deitsch Eileschpiggel* which Professor Frey is getting out. The serious student of American English can not afford to ignore Pennsylvania Dutch. Unfortunately such a policy was sometimes followed in the *DAE* with unsatisfactory results. For example the following is from the *DAE*:

> Brummer. *Pa.* [Cf. G. *brummen,* to hum, buzz, etc.] A blast furnace.—1898 *Lebanon* (Pa.) *News* 20 Jan. in *Congress. Rec.* Feb. 1506/1 Our people can again hear the sweet familiar sound of the 'brummer,' which to many is more agreeable music than any of the Wagner compositions.

On the surface this looks all right, but in Lambert's *A Dictionary of the Non-English Words of the Pennsylvania-German Dialect* (1924) we have this:

> *brummer* . . . m, steam factory whistle. G. Brummer.

Now when we look back at the *DAE* entry we see that the definition is probably a mere guess based upon one not well understood quotation.

Professor Neumann's article on 'American Newspaper Interest in English Language Problems,' besides supplying me an appreciated modern example of 'number 1' ('No. 1'), gives further proof that much valuable information, along with a considerable amount of nonsense, about language is continually bobbing up in newspapers. Writers should consult

dictionaries! For instance, in the May 1945 issue of *Coronet,* p. 97, a delightful but false tale, that may deceive many, is told of how the word *spud,* meaning Irish potato, is in reality the abbreviation S.P.U.D., standing for Society for the Prevention of Unwholesome Diet, an organization that combatted Sir Walter Raleigh's plan to grow Indian tubers in Ireland.

In the current (July) number of *Reader's Digest* there is an excellent article about Joseph Nathan Kane and his 'first facts.' On page 58 Kane is alleged to have given a Hollywood motion picture producer the information that the umbrella was unknown in this country before 1772. This pronouncement was accepted at face value by the picture people, and as a result studio authors rewrote an entire sequence, whatever that is. A glance at the proper entry in the *DAE* would have shown those interested that as early as 1745 Georgians 'scorn[ed] Umbrellas and Musketto-Nets, as Jamaican and Carolinean Effeminacies.'

But to get back to *American Speech* for April. In one place at least of my article on 'The New Element in American English,' I have been politely corrected by a reader who informs me that I was in error in saying that 'no dictionary points out the fact' that Irving should be credited with the expression *almighty dollar.* My informant says, quite correctly, that this ascription occurs in the latest edition of Webster, and another friend working on this suggestion later pointed out to me that this attribution occurs as early as the Webster of 1909.

Professor Clifton's additional gleanings from *Sam Slick in Texas* show that a book may profitably be read more than once in searching for significant uses of words. *Holawagos, marvel,* v., and the expression *titus and pop corn* are all new to me. Professor Clifton, however fell into an amusing and pardonable error in the following passage which I quote from this article:

> *Sawyer, n.* Card shark, crooked gambler. '. . . the gamblers there thought he'd got more'n his share, and so picked out three of their top sawyers, that Wade didn't know, clubbed together, and made up a puss of ten thousand dollars, for 'em to go down the river with him, and get a game.'

It is not the proper procedure to regard 'sawyer' in this passage as meaning 'card shark, crooked gambler.' The correct approach is to recognize *top sawyer* as an expression of some antiquity meaning here 'a first-rate hand at something,' as the *OED* phrases it. The expression harks back to the days of saw-pits and pit-saws, the workman at the upper handle of a pit-saw being in a superior position.

This error on Professor Clifton's part calls to mind what I suspect of being the same sort of thing, exhibited in the *DAE* under the entry

'A-here.' This form is given in the *DAE* as having originated in this country, and as being used in the expression 'look a-here,' the first example of which is dated 1843. The *DAE* regards 'look a-here' as a modification made in this country of the much older expression 'look ye ('ee) here.' If the *OED* and the *EDD* are consulted, it is clear that 'look here' is at least as old as 1583, and there is no way of telling how old 'lookee' in the sense of 'look ye' is. The *OED* has an example of 'lookee there now' as early as 1814, and in 1865 Dickens wrote 'lookee here my dear.' I am not able to see any appreciable difference between Dicken's 'lookee here' and the 1843 example in *DAE* of 'look a here.' Consequently I am loath to agree with the *DAE* in regarding 'a-here' as an American addition to the vocabulary. It appears to me nothing more than '-ee here' in a slightly different form. I trust that some readers of *American Speech* who are able to see further into such mysteries as this will advise me if they feel that I am in error on this point. At any rate, am I not right in thinking that the expression should have been taken care of in the *DAE* under 'look, *v.*,' as was done in the *OED*?

I take pleasure in proffering Mr. Byington some assistance with the word 'whirligig' as it occurs in the following passage in Cooper's *Pioneers*: 'Then the exciting and dangerous "whirligig" would be suffered to possess its moment of notice.'

The 'whirligig' mentioned here is undoubtedly the device described in the following passage from Gertrude Lefferts Vanderbilt, *The Social History of Flatbush* [L. I.] . . . (N. Y. 1899), pp. 367-368:

> The young officers [i.e. young American officers on parole in Flatbush, Long Island, during the Revolution] went to the woods near by and cut down a tree. This they planted in the middle of the pond, leaving about four feet of it extending above the surface of the ice. At right angles to this they fastened the rest of the main body of the tree with an iron bolt, as I understood it, which would revolve very rapidly when moved by some one standing close to it. On to this crosspiece there were attached many little sleds with ropes of various lengths, and when one was stationed in the center to *turn* this crosspiece, the velocity with which all these sleds were whirled round and round the pond was very great. It was a sort of winter merry-go-round, and to this all the young people far and near were invited. Of course they all accepted the invitation and went, and a right merry time they had. The rotary motion communicated by the revolving piece to which the little sleds were attached was exhilarating. It might be accelerated at the will of the party who controlled the crosspiece.

It is altogether likely that this merry-go-round was what Cooper called a 'whirligig.' The thing was no doubt of Dutch origin. Our only evidence for it is this passage in Cooper. The gadget is mentioned and pictured in J. Ter Gouw, *De Volksvermaken* (Harlem, 1871) p. 588. The author says (I translate):

> Also in former times we spread the fame of our ice-sports to foreign lands. . . .

In the winter of 1682-3 the Thames was frozen solid from the beginning of December until the beginning of February, and the Dutchmen had their fun, and the English every day stood around by thousands to watch not only the skating but also the *Dutch whimsies,* of which we give here a couple of pictures after an English woodcut of 1683.

One of the two pictures shows the upright post of the 'whirligig,' the horizontal bar with one sled—not several—at its end. Two men are pushing the bar, thus causing the sled to fly around the center post, while spectators stand in a circle around the whimsy to enjoy the spectacle.

In the *OED,* s. 'whimsy 5.,' there is given an obsolete sense, 'A merry-go-round, roundabout,' and the only example is as follows:

1684 *Ballads illustr. Gt. Frost* (Percy Soc.) 4 There were Dutch whimsies turned swiftly round Faster than horses run on level ground.

Among the shorter articles in the April *American Speech* the one (pp. 154-155) on 'Cahoot' by Leo Spitzer is especially interesting. The connection which he suggests between 'in cahoots' and the American 'cahoo,' meaning a pitchhole, may well be entirely valid. At any rate, it is the best explanation of 'cahoot' I've seen.

In A. R. Dunlap's 'Localisms' (p. 157) I am particularly struck by the 1944 reference to 'dornicks' to mean natural, undressed slabs of stone used as gravestones. This sense of 'dornick' has not been recognized in dictionaries, but the mention of such grave slabs reminds me of a passage in a travel book, Moritz Busch's *Wanderungen zwischen Hudson und Mississippi* . . . , Stuttgart und Tübingen, 1854. On p. 130 of the first volume of this work the author, in describing a visit he made to Watervliet, a Shaker village not many miles southeast of Dayton, Ohio, mentions the Shaker graveyard and says:

In dem rechten Winkel . . . befindet sich der kleine Gottesacker der Gemeinschaft, ein einfacher verwilderter Grasplatz ohne Hügel, ohne Kreuze, ohne Blumen, überhaupt durch nichts als Begräbnissort ausgezeichnet, als durch einige platte Steine, die weder Meissel noch Griffel verrathen, sondern das Aussehen haben, als habe man sie schlecht und recht, wie sie ein Stück davon auf dem Felde lagen, aufgesucht und hierhergesteckt.

Such gravestones were undoubtedly common in pioneer times and may well have been called 'dornicks.'

LEARNING TO TALK

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP
Lansdowne, Pennsylvania

THIS is an account of the phonetic aspects of how one small boy learned to speak his native English. The subject was born 15 January, 1941, in New York City. In September, 1942, he was moved to a suburb of Philadelphia, where he has lived since. At the time of writing (April, 1945) he is fairly healthy, nervous, over-active, self-assertive, frequently 'difficult,' garrulous, and gregarious.

His principal associates have been his father, mother, and mother's uncle. All are college-educated New Yorkers. Their speech is normal, with the following differences: The mother's uncle consistently 'drops r's' and uses [ɜ˞] in words like *bird*. The mother has had speech-training and done speech-teaching. Her usage in words like *ask* and words with final and preconsonantal r's is erratic. She says [æsk] or [ask], [bɜ˞d] or [bɜd]. The father spent many of his formative years in Upstate New York and California, and consistently sounds final and preconsonantal r's.

The child's speech may have been retarded by whooping-cough at the age of one, and by being, during the subject period, an only child. His passive vocabulary developed normally, and by the end of his second year he is believed to have understood several hundred words.

At 12 months his babble consisted of repetition of several simple open syllables: [ŋãŋãŋã], [ɻaɻaɻa], [gɯgɯgɯ], [ŋĩŋĩŋĩ], etc. The consonants were [ŋ], [ʋ], [ɻ], [ɲ], [j], [g]. The vowels were [i], [ɯ], and a variable low vowel [æ/a/ɑ/ɐ], here transcribed [a]. The syllable [ŋã] is believed to have signified annoyance and [ɻa] contentment. [i:] was a cry of pleasure.

By 18 months he had added [b], [m], [n], [k], [d], and [w]; also a back round vowel varying from [ɒ] to [u].

At 20 months he tried a word, *car* [kɑ], but after a few trials dropped it and did not take it up again for several months. His next attempt was *gone* [gɔ̃(n)], in which the second element varied from [ɔ̃] to [õ] and the third, when present, might be [n], [m], or [ũ]. For three months this word constituted his entire vocabulary. He used it frequently and always appositely.

Between 18 and 24 months he added [h], [p], [t], and [s]. He dropped [ɯ] and the palatal and labiodental stops and nasals. The low vowel narrowed its range of variation down to [a/ɑ]. The back-round vowel split into two: [ɒ/ɔ] and [o/ou/u].

At 23 months his babble was varied to include alternations of syllables: [gogugogu], [dadidadi], [ɑiɑiɑi], [uiuiui]. He had added the following words: *hole* [ho(u)], *meow* (cat) [iau], *woof-woof* (dog) [ʔʊˀʊ], *moo* (cow)

[mu:]. Despite these examples of onomatopoeia, his parents have carefully refrained from using baby-talk on him.

Between twenty-three and twenty-four months he began to learn words in earnest. He also acquired an interest in printed letters, frequently pointing to them and asking '[bi]?' (meaning 'What's this called?'), with the result that for several weeks a quarter of his rapidly expanding vocabulary consisted of names of letters. At twenty-four months his active vocabulary was as follows: *B* [bi], *'be?'* [bi], *dot* [dɑ], *eye* [ai], *gone* [gɔ̃(n)], *hole* [ho(u)], *hot* [hɑ], *meow* [iau], *moo* [mu], *more* [moi], *O* [o(u)], *S* [s:], *star* ('pentagram') [tɑi], *woof-woof* [ʔuʔu]. Nearly all syllables were open, and his use of [i] for final [ɚ] became general as he learned more words of this type. At this time he made his first attempts at sentences: 'All gone' [ɔ gɔn] and 'Gone daddy' [gɔ̃ dadi].

Thenceforth the rate of addition of new words increased until it reached a maximum, at twenty-six months, of about a dozen new words a day—or at least too many to keep accurate count of. The words were nearly all fitted into the phonetic pattern previously laid down, with the following additions: he experimented with new diphthongs, differentiated between [o(u)] and [u] (though not consistently), and added a final [ʔ].

At twenty-five months he was saying: *A* [ei], *all* [o], *B* [bi], *baby* [bibiʔ], *ball* [bo], *bar* [bai, bau], *bobby* (*pin*) [babiʔ], *book* [boʔ], *bow* (of a ship) [bai, bau], *bowl* [bo], *boy* [boi], *C* [si], *car* [kai, kau], *cold* [ko], *D* [di], *Daddy* [dadiʔ], *door* [doi], *dot* [daʔ], *Dotty* [datiʔ], *E* [i], *ear* [io], *eye* [ai], *F* [ʔəΦ], *fire* [Φai], *G* [dzi], *gone* [gɔ̃], *good-bye* [bai], *good-night* [nai], *H* [iʔ], *hair* [hei], *hole* [ho], *(shoe-)horn* [hɔ̃], *hot* [haʔ], *I* (the letter) [ai], *I see!* [aisi], *J* [zi], *knee* [ni], *knife* [nai], *knot* [naʔ], *L* [io], *light* [jaiʔ], *man* [mə̃], *meow* [jau], *moo* [mu], *moon* (crescent) [mũ], *more* [moi], *Mummy* [mə̃miʔ], *nails* [nɛʔ], *O* [o], *oil* [oi], *P* [pi], *Peter* [piʔ], *pipe* [pai], *roof* [vuΦ], *S* [s:], *star* [tai], *T* [ti], *tie* [tai], *toe* [to], *towel* [tau], *toy* [toi], *U* [iu], *uncle* [ə̃ʔi], *V* [vi], *Violet* [vai], *wall* [wo], *woof-woof* [ʔuΦʔuΦ], *wow!* [wau], *Y* [wai, wau].

It will be seen that open monosyllables with simple initial consonants still strongly predominated. The free vowels in the foregoing list were all long; the checked short. Hence there was a distinction between, for instance, *book* [boʔ] and *bowl* [bo:]. There was also a distinction between nasal and unnasalized vowels, as in *moo* [mu:] and *moon* [mũ:]. Diphthongs were level, with the initial and final qualities more prominent than the connecting glide, so that they gave the effect of two separate vowel phonemes in succession. Free [o] was [o:] or, less often [ou]. Fricatives, true glides ([j], [w]), and mid-front vowels were just appearing. Disyllables had no stress-accent.

During the following weeks his vowel-pattern rapidly elaborated, until at twenty-six months it comprised the following:

(1) Five longs (open syllables only): [i:], [a:], [o:], [u:], [ɝ:], as in *me* [mi:], *bath* [ba:], *no* [no:], *new* [nu:], *bird* [bɝ:].

(2) Seven shorts (closed syllables only): [i], [ɪ], [ɛ], [a], [ɔ], [u], [ə], as in *piece* [pis], *picture* [pɪs], *seven* [hɛdn̩], *off* [af], *water* [ɔˀ], *boot* [buˀ], *milk* [məˀ].

(3) Five nasals: [ĩ], [ã], [ɔ̃], [ũ], [ə̃], as in *pink* [pĩˀ], *hand* [hã], *horn* [hɔ̃], *spoon* [pũ], *uncle* [ə̃ˀi]. As in French, length-distinctions were less significant in nasal vowels than in unnasalized vowels.

(4) Seven diphthongs: [ei], [ai], [oi], [iu], [au], [ãi], [ɔ̃i], as in *chair* [hei], *typewriter* [taiˀ], *story* [toi], *pouch* [pau], *U* [iu], *sign* [hãi], *arm* [ɔ̃i].

Other combinations appeared at this time, but so evanescently that it was hard to tell whether they should have been considered part of the child's phonetic equipment, as in the case of *tree* [həi:]. The child's pronunciation was changing so rapidly that no rigorously accurate analysis of his speech-development would have been possible except by watching him day and night to record every sound. Still, the foregoing classification of vowels gives a pretty good idea of his phonetic organization at the time—a pattern consistent enough within itself, but quite unlike that of normal adult English speech. His [a] phonemes were just beginning to split into front and back varieties. He experimented with centering diphthongs, as in *star* [tai, tau, taɝ]. More closed syllables appeared, as in *watch* [vaˀç], *toys* [tois], *yes* [zɛs], *brush* [baˀç], *box* [baˀ, baˀs, baxs], *match* [mats, max], *mouth* [mauf, maus], *teeth* [tits, tið].

Confusion existed between [v] and [w]; between [h], [s], and [ʃ], as in *fish* [ɪç], [ɪs], *shoe* [çu:], [hu:]; between [t] and [k], as in *coat* [tuˀ, kuˀ]; between [o] and [u], as in *hole* [ho:], [hu:]; between [ei] and [ai], as in *grapefruit* [vaiˀfu].

His attempts to learn words with final stops and final syllabic nasals at the same time resulted in *bacon* [beiˀ, beiˀm̩], *bed* [bɛdn̩], *egg* [ei, eidn̩], *napkin* [naˀn̩], *pad* [pa, padn̩], *thank you* [ãˀn̩] and *wagon* [vædn̩, væˀn̩, wæi].

Other attempts at new combinations were *chair* [çi:, hei, hɛiə], *pill* [pɛiə, peu], *stair* [tɛiə], *toilet* [toii], and *W* [bədəbədə]. On 15 March, 1943, a check, as accurate as circumstances permitted, showed an active vocabulary of 173 words.

At twenty-seven months he was assembling three and four word sentences, like 'Nice day go out.' He was struggling with polysyllables, as *garter* [gɑɝsɝ, gɑɝtsɝ], *robin-redbreast* [vɑbĩwɛbɛs], *waterfall* [vɔfɔu]. He distinguished regularly between [ɑ] and [æ], and between [o], [ʊ], and [u].

He had not mastered [hw], [θ], [ð], [ʃ], [tʃ], [ʒ], [dʒ], [l], and [r]. Hence *whistle* was [fisu], *through* [siu], *table* [teibm̩], *detach* [əntæˀç].

At twenty-nine months he had a nearly complete set of vowels: [i], [ɪ], [ei], [ɛ], [æ], [ɑ], [ɔ], [ou], [ʊ], [u], [ə], [ɝ/ɚ], [ai], [au], [ɔi], [iu], plus somewhat erratic use of centering diphthongs in [ɚ/ə]. [ɝ/ɚ] was usually of the unretroflexed type. The isolated nasal vowels, as in *candy* [kãi], had largely disappeared, though he still sometimes confused nasal consonants. Initial consonant clusters were commonly represented by [f], as in *train* [fein], *straw* [fɔ]. Initial [l] was usually represented by [j], as in *library* [jaibɛi], or [w], as in *lot* [wɑˀ]. Final and preconsonantal [l] became an [u]-vowel or glide. Other [l]'s were usually omitted, as in *globe* [goub]. He did not, then or long after, distinguish clearly between [il], [ɪl], [ju], [lu], and [u]. Hence he pronounced *wheel, feel, fill,* and *few* alike as [fiu]; *blue* as [biu]; *too* as [tu:] or [tiu]; *can you* as [kænu]. Final [t] developed now for the first time, as in *bat* [bætʰ].

At thirty months *train* had become [tʍein]. He was using fairly complete sentences, such as 'Take my bib off' [tei mai bɪb əf]; 'Uncle punch holes in paper' [ə̃ŋ: pə̃s houz ɪn peipɚ]. He was just mastering the personal pronouns, and still said 'my' for 'your.'

At thirty-two months [v] and [w] became general for all prevocal [l]'s, as in *hello* [hə'vəu], *light* [wait]. Stress-accent finally appeared.

During the following month the child was sent to nursery school. To his parents' dismay he immediately began broadening his diphthongs in the manner characteristic of Philadelphia, where, in extreme cases, [i], [e], [aɪ], [aʊ], [ɑɚ], [ɔɪ], [ɔɚ], [o], and [u] become respectively [ëi], [æɪ], [ɒɪ], [æʊ], [ɒɚ], [oɪ], [oɚ], [ëʊ], and [ɪü].[1] The parents have struggled with indifferent results against this dialect ever since. Sample sentences of this period were ['ɪs 'fɪŋz ə 'brəuˀən]; ['ɑɪ də̃ũˀ 'wɒn 'tü]. *On,* which had begun existence as [ãn], changed to [ɔn] in accordance with local usage.

At this time [ʌ] became differentiated from [ə] in quality. Diphthongs were divided into rising and falling; e.g. the level diphthongs [ai] and [iu] became [aĭ] and [ju]. His [r] was now perfect, though [w] was still occasionally substituted for it. It had developed from [w] and [v] through [ʍ], and [ɯ], as in *tree* [tʍi:], and *Frank* [fɯæ̃ˀ], to an unretroflexed glide [r], and finally to the common retroflexed glide.

By thirty-five months, except for the affricates (which he was beginning to master), [l], [θ], [ð], and the more difficult consonantal clusters, his assortment of consonants was for practical purposes complete. Sentences were: 'Look at my little lamb' ['wukī maɪ 'wɪu 'wæ̃:m]; 'This is the train

1. See R. W. Tucker, 'Notes on the Philadelphia Dialect,' *Am. Sp.* 19: 37.

track' ['wɪs ɪz ə 'treɪn 'træk]; 'Uncle's through with the bathroom' ['ʌŋkiz 'fu wɪf 'bæfrum], 'You can't see the wheels' [ju 'kæ̃ʔ 'si ə 'hwiuz]; 'I want a panda' [a 'vãt ə 'pɛ:ndɚ].

Since then the growth of the child's vocabulary has continued, but his pronunciation has changed with extreme slowness. At thirty-nine months he was saying: [gə'baɪ 'dɛədïi, 'sïi jə 'wɛɪdɚ 'ɔ:n]; [ɑɪ 'drɪŋk mɛɪ tə'meɪ'dʒüs]; ['pu 'huk 'rɑɪ ɪn 'æ 'wɪu hou 'rɑɪʔ 'nɪɚ ə 'faɪɚ,pweɪs]; ['dæ:dïi, dɪd ju 'nɔu, ,ɑɪ kud 'rɑɪd mɛɪ 'bɑɪsəku ɔn ə sə'mẽʔ 'nɛ:u]; ['nɑ 'gɔɪnə bi 'dɪsə'pɔɪntəd 'nœu ,ɑɪm 'nɒ:t].

At present, at fifty-one months, he is just beginning to develop normal [l], [θ], and [ð]. When this change is complete there will be little left of a specifically infantile nature in his speech. During the summer months the Philadelphia dialect gradually disappears, but it returns each fall with the reopening of nursery school.[2]

It is suggested that a number of studies of the phonetic development of children, at which this article is an attempt, would shed light on certain recurrent phenomena in the evolution of language: for instance, the breakdown of [l] in Latin, whereby *platea* became Italian *piazza* and *alba* became French *aube;*[3] the parallel change that has occurred in Scottish English;[4] the glottalization of medial and final [t] that has become common in many dialects of English; the wholesale loss of final consonants in French and Chinese, and the development of phonemic nasalization in French and Portuguese. It is a platitude that a principal cause of phonetic change is the survival into adult life of phonetic infantilism; but much remains to be done in working out the precise rationale of the process that results in, let us say, one dialect's losing its final r's while another dialect of the same language keeps them.

One point might be made now: If the child's speech is analyzed at any stage through which it has passed so far, it is seen to be erratic; that is, it contains phonetic anomalies and exceptions that do not fit into a neat phoneme pattern. It is always in the midst of splitting a phoneme into two, or developing a new sound, or abandoning an old one that did not fit, or using two widely different members of the same diaphone. Nor do I see reason to expect it ever to reach a perfectly stable and consistent state. As far as my own observations go, all normal speech, at least in this

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2. In the eleven months since this was written, the subject has developed a very dark [l], actually a kind of [l]—colored uvular glide or fricative. The sounds [θ], [ð] are not yet established. The Philadelphian vowel-broadening has apparently disappeared for good.

3. See A. Lloyd James, *Historical Introduction to French Phonetics*, pp. 125, 131 ff.

4. See Grant and Dixon, *Manual of Modern Scots*, p. 17 f.; also E. Dieth, *A Grammar of the Buchan Dialect*, p. 100 ff.

part of the world, is somewhat erratic.[5] Even if our subject becomes speech-conscious and deliberately purges his speech of its inconsistencies, he will still say *ugh!* [ʌx], *huh?* [hʌ̃], and *yeah* [jɛə], using phones [x], [ʌ̃], and [ɛə] which do not fit into his general phonemic pattern. ([ɛə] is anomalous because he uses [ɛɚ] in words like *bear.*) It would seem that such anomalies occur in other languages; Iraqi Arabic has a word [zjɛ̃], 'okay,' which is described as 'apparently outside the phonological system of the language.'[6]

This is not to deprecate the phoneme theory or to urge that erraticisms be taught students. It is merely to emphasize that erratic speech is normal speech, and that the relation between a textbook dialect, neatly classified into consistently used phonemes, and the speech on any given day of any given real human being, is analogous to that between a geometrician's ideal cube and one of the cubical blocks from our subject's toy set—worn edges, chipped paint, tooth-marks, and all.

5. Cf. D. Jones, 'r-kʌləd vauəlz,' *Le Maître Phonètique,* 1940, p. 56. On p. 60 Dr. Jones says, 'Erratic speech must, I think, be regarded as abnormal speech.'

6. C. Rabin, 'ira:ki arabik,' *Le Maître Phonètique,* 1940, p. 44 f.

AN AGGIE VOCABULARY OF SLANG

FRED EIKEL, JR.
The University of Texas

THE Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas is located at College Station, about five miles from Bryan (population 12,000) and a hundred miles from a city of any importance. It is the largest military school in the country and generally reputed to have more officers in the service than any other school. In 1942, when the enrollment had reached its all-time height, about 8,000 students were in attendance. In number of students enrolled, it is said to have the largest veterinary medicine school, the largest agricultural school, and the second-largest engineering school in the country, the latter being surpassed only by Purdue University.

In spite of the large enrollment, there is a spirit of friendliness, usually characteristic only of a small school, which pervades the entire student body; students at A. and M., as the college is commonly called, belong to one 'fraternity'—the Aggie fraternity, composed of all students and former students. The school is rich in traditional customs, as the vocabulary will reveal, some of which have been discontinued for the duration of the war. Outstanding at A. and M. is the vocabulary, and this vocabulary is part and parcel of the Aggie spirit, the Aggie traditions, and the Aggie fraternity. This vocabulary is known and used by all students at A. and M., and it is through this vocabulary largely that the Aggie spirit is nurtured and that the students gain their close, fraternal feeling, which distinguishes them from the outside world.[1]

The Aggie vocabulary is a *must*. A freshman in order to win the approval of upper classmen and thus to avoid 'the Board' acquires the vocabulary almost immediately upon his arrival on the campus. In the dining hall, a freshman who cannot ask for food in the Aggie language will more than likely leave the table hungry.

Some of the words in the Aggie vocabulary will be recognized as general military or college slang; many of course are unique with the Aggies. If some of the words are found in recent vocabularies of service men and not in earlier military vocabularies, it is possible that these

1. This vocabulary was collected during the years 1942 to 1944, while the author was an instructor in the English department of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. The author has to thank only the many Aggies, both his own students and others, as well as ex-students, who were kind enough to admit him to their 'fraternity' and reveal their characteristic speech. He wishes here to acknowledge gratefully his appreciation.

originated with the Aggies and were imposed upon the service men by Aggies, for as Aggies require freshmen to adopt the Aggie language, so whenever ex-Aggies meet in the service they insist upon their language.

Since A. and M. is a college for men only, quite naturally the vocabulary is marked by freedom of expression and by obscenity. No attempt has been made to bowdlerize the vocabulary in this article. Allen Walker Read's statement has been the guiding principle throughout: 'For the scientific linguist, the propriety or respectability of a word is merely one aspect of its history.'[2]

An attempt has been made to mark the words that have appeared in other vocabularies, so far as that has been possible from the mass of scattered materials on slang in recent years. If some closely related word was found in another vocabulary, its source and variation in meaning are indicated. When particularly interesting or revealing of the Aggie spirit, definitions were quoted from *The Cadence,* a handbook for freshmen published by A. and M. College, in which appeared a limited vocabulary of Aggie slang. Quotations from the students' own speech have been added in many cases to illustrate the use of the word. The following abbreviations of references are found in the vocabulary:

BV: Lester V. Berrey and Melvin Van den Bark, *The American Thesaurus of Slang,* New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1942.

C: *The Cadence,* A Handbook for Freshmen, College Station, Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, 1942.

G: 'Glossary of Army Slang,' *American Speech,* XVI, 163-169 (October, 1941).

K: Park Kendall, *Dictionary of Service Slang,* New York, M. S. Mill Co., Inc., 1944.

AGGIE, *n.* 'One of us.' A student in the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. (BV: Rustic, bumpkin; agricultural student.)

AGGIE-EX, *n.* A former student. See *Ex-Aggie.*

AGGIE GREAT, *n.* A term used to characterize celebrated football players of the past.

AGGIELAND, *n.* The campus and its immediate environs. (Col. R. E. Dunn, Director of the A. and M. Band, composed a song entitled 'The Spirit of Aggieland.' Business people refer to College Station as 'Aggieland'; e.g. Aggieland Inn, Aggieland Grill, Aggieland Cleaners, Aggieland Filling Station, Aggieland Pharmacy, etc.)

AGGIEVATE, *vt.* After *to aggravate.* Used by some teachers to stimulate class room response or to mildly chide a student who answers a question foolishly. 'Don't aggievate me.'

AIR OUT, *n.* A hazing stunt. *vt.* To run the freshmen out of the dormitory in giving them an *air out.* 'Go out and get some fresh air, fish, because we are coming after you with a Sam Browne.' 'Air out, fish.'

AIR RAID, *n.* (A command.) A hazing stunt. In the dining hall an upper classman may interrupt the meal by giving the command 'Air raid!' Some freshmen will jump up and hold up their chairs like anti-aircraft guns, or hold milk bottles to

2. Allen Walker Read, 'An Obscenity Symbol,' *American Speech,* IX, 264 (December, 1934).

their eyes like binoculars, or pitchers to their ears like head-phones, and make violent vibratory noises with their silverware.

ARTILLERY, *n.* Beans. BV.

A.W.O.L. Absent without official leave. 'The act which costs a cadet Senior Court trial.' BV.

BABY, *n.* Mustard. G.

TO BEAT OFF HANDLES (q.v.), *vt.* To beat freshmen who have just become sophomores. Done by upper classmen.

BATT, *n. The Battalion,* the school newspaper.

B.C. Battery Commander.

BIG D, *n.* Dallas.

BIRD DOG, *n.* One who accompanies a couple and is therefore superfluous. 'The third party of "Three's a crowd." ' *vit.* To be a bird dog. (G gives *bird dogging,* 'Lower classmen dancing with upper classman's girl.' So also K. This use is not in Aggie Slang.)

BITCH, *v.* To gripe, complain. BV.

BLACK COW, *n.* Chocolate milk. BV.

BLANKETS, *n.* Hot cakes. BV.

BLEED, *v.* To complain or gripe.

BLOOD, *n.* Catsup. BV.

THE BOARD, *n.* The board, often made out of a baseball bat, with which upper classmen reprimand freshmen. BV.

BOTS, *n.* R.A. (q.v.).

BRYAN 400, *n.* 'That select group of Bryan's feminine society which allows itself to be dated only by seniors.' C.

BRASS, *n.* (1) Metal buttons, buckles, and insignia. (2) An officer. (BV: Full-dress belt plates.)

BUGGY BITCHERS, *n.* Field artillery.

BUGLE STAND, *n.* A stand with a megaphone through which the bugles are blown. 'That spot from which the tempo of our busy day is emitted.' C.

BULL, *n.* (1) 'Superfluous conversation.' BV. (2) *The bull:* 'That rarely seen individual whose existence shadows and knows our every move, the Commandant.' C.

BULL NECK, *n.* Meat.

BULL RING, *n.* 'Disciplinary drill for the purpose of removing excess rams' (q.v.). C. (Not mentioned in BV. Godfrey Irwin, *American Tramp and Underworld Slang,* New York, Sears Publishing Co., Inc., 1930: 'The gaol or prison walk as a punishment or for exercise.' This probably explains the origin of the Aggie term. G: Bull pen.)

BULL SESSION, *n.* 'Talk-fest.' (BV: Conversation, discussion. These words are too mild to describe the Aggie term.)

BULL TEXT, *n.* Military Science.

BUNION BREEDER, *n.* Infantry man. K.

BUST, *vit.* (1) To reduce to ranks. G. (2) To fail a course. (3) With *out:* 'Civilian again; dismissal because of scholastic embarrassment.' C. BV.

BUTTERFLIES, *n.* 'When an Aggie hears one of the Aggie songs played, he gets butterflies in his stomach.' A feeling of weakness (?) due to awe and admiration and general emotional tension. (K: *Full of butterflies,* full of burps.)

BUZZ (in TO GET A BUZZ), *n.* To enjoy thoroughly. Probably from alcoholic reaction, a strongly stimulating effect.

BUZZARD, *n.* Chicken or turkey, the only fowl served in the A. and M. dining hall. (K: Chicken.)

BUZZARD BUSTERS, *n.* 'Cadets of the Coast Artillery Regiment; anti-aircraft, a specialty.' C. (K: Air corps.)

C.C.C. BOYS (Campus Cop Corps). The staff of policemen on the campus.

CACKLE(S), *n.* Egg. (BV: Cackleberry, cacklers. K: Cackle jelly.)

CADENCE, n. A handbook designed to serve as a guide for freshmen.

CHICKEN, *n.* (1) 'One who is unfair or takes advantage of another Aggie.' (2) 'A low or dirty trick.' C. (These meanings are not found in BV. Hugh Sebastian in 'Agricultural College Slang in South Dakota,' *American Speech,* XI, 279 [October, 1936], defines *chicken,* a timid soul; a sissy. These meanings are not in the Aggie vocabulary. *Chicken* and *confetti* (q.v.) are the only two words of Sebastian's list that are found in Aggie slang.)

CIVIES, *n.* 'A senior's comfort, under classmen's envy: civilian clothes.' C. BV.

CLIP, *n.* Jew. From 'clipped dick,' one who has been circumcised.

CLIP DICK, *n.* A student of veterinary medicine. (Several of the veterinary medicine students have been Jews; therefore the term for *Jew,* or a modification there-

of, has been applied to all students of veterinary medicine.)

COGITATE, *vi.* To think. (An Aggie will use *cogitate* for *think* whenever he can. The word is used as a hazing stunt. An upper classman might ask a freshman: 'What do you think of today's assignment, fish?' The latter will respond: 'I cogitate that it was much too long, sir.' The Board might be applied should he forget and say *think.* A freshman is expected to be able to spell the word backwards: 'E, cross the t, t, a, cross the t, t, dot, the i, i, g, o, c.')

COMICAL WARFARE, *n.* Chemical warfare.

CONFETTI, *n.* Toilet tissue. (In marching to yell practice the night before a major football game, toilet paper is broadcast in the fashion of confetti at festivals, hence the Aggie word. Sebastian lists *engineer's confetti.*)

COOKIE PUSHER, *n.* 'Male student at a co-ed college.' C. (BV: pleasure-seeker; fashionable person, dandy, or dude; ladies' man. Although these meanings are not suggested by the Aggie term, they may explain its origin. M. C. McPhee, 'College Slang,' *American Speech,* III, 131 [December, 1927], gives the gerund *cookie-pushing,* but not the noun: 'A student who spends much time in the society of the ladies is a "heavy cake," or a "teahound." He is given a "cookie-pushing," or "lounglizarding" [*sic*].')

COSMO, *n,* A foreign student. From *cosmopolitan.*

COW, *n.* Milk. BV.

C.Q., *n.* Call to Quarters.

CRAPPER BUILDER, *n.* A student in the corps of engineers, R.O.T.C.

CROP FAILURE, *n.* An expensive automobile.

CUFFS, *n.* 'That turned-up distinction for junior or senior trouser legs, now suspended for the duration.' C.

CUFF-CONSCIOUS, *adj.* 'Juniors with heads swelled over their newly acquired authority.' C.

CUM, *n.* (Aggie spelling.) Salad dressing or mayonnaise. (BV: *Come* for gravy.)

CUSH, *n.* Dessert. (Of uncertain origin. In most vocabularies of college or underworld slang *cush* is included to mean money. The only satisfactory explanation is that *cush* is an abbreviation of *cushion,* since most desserts are soft and cushion-like. For the first forty-five days at Texas A. and M. freshmen are not permitted to eat desserts. They sing:

'Humpty, umpty, I dough;
Oh me, oh my;
Forty-five days till cush.')

CUT, *n.* Class absence. BV.

DAGO, *n.* Macaroni.

DAY DODGER, *n.* A non-dormitory student.

DEAL, *vt.* Pass. 'Deal the bread.' 'Deal one' (throw me a piece of bread); 'Deal some' (throw me several pieces of bread). (Deal is mentioned by BV only in connection with cards. Jean Dickinson in 'Collegiate Use of "Deal,"' *American Speech,* XVI, 288 [December, 1941], makes this comment: 'The use of deal as a verb seems less common [than as a noun], but one hears something like this: "Do you want a coke?" "Sure. Deal me one."' At the table an Aggie regularly uses *deal* or *shoot* for *pass.*)

DEAN'S TEAM, *n.* List of students passing less than ten hours of work. 'Candidates for one-way corps trips' (q.v.). BV.

DETAIL, *adj.* Selected for some special service. *n.* Body or persons so selected.

DEW DROP, *n.* Sophomore. (A title used in the presence of ladies.)

DIRT, *n.* Black pepper. (BV: Sugar.)

DISH WATER, *n.* Soup.

DOPE, *n.* Coffee.

DORM, *n.* Dormitory. BV.

DUCK WALK, *n.* Walking on your haunches in a squatting position; a hazing stunt.

DUSTY, *n.* 'An Aggie short in stature, built too close to the ground.' C. From *dusty butt.*

DRY CUSH, *n.* Cookies.

ELEPHANT WALK, *n.* Before the Thanksgiving Day football game, which is the biggest event in athletics and the last game of the season, the annual game between A. and M. and the University of Texas, the seniors gather around the flag pole for the Elephant Walk. 'As an old elephant will wander off to some secluded spot to await the coming of death, this

event symbolizes that these men who are spending their last year at A. and M. will soon be of no use to the athletic teams as members of the Twelfth Man [q.v.], for they are ending their college careers.' C.

EX, *n.* A former student.

EX-AGGIE, *n.* Same as *ex* above. Many former students will call themselves an *Aggie-ex* to show that they are still imbued with the Aggie spirit: 'Once an Aggie—always an Aggie.'

FAMILY JEWELS, *n.* Testicles.

FART-OFF, *n.* An insult. *vt.* To insult.

FEATHER LEGS, *n.* One who is a chicken (q.v.) or uses chicken practices.

FISH, *n.* A freshman.

FISH DAY, *n.* One day of the year is set aside as Fish Day. On this day freshmen have the privileges of upper classmen, and upper classmen obey freshmen. Discontinued since the war.

FISH MEETING, *n.* A meeting at which upper classmen tell freshmen of their mistakes and administer three licks for each offence. Probably also discontinued for the duration.

FISH STRIPE, *n.* 'The mark of lowly distinction worn on fish's left shirt cuff.' C.

FLAG WAVER, *n.* A member of the Signal Corps. (BV: patriot.)

FLAMING ONION, *n.* The insignia of the Ordnance Department.

FLOAT OUT, *n.* A mild insult; 'conversational victory.' *vt.* To insult mildly. (This developed from the practice of drowning out: to pour a bucket of cold water on someone asleep.)

FLUFF OFF, *vt.* To snob, slight, or to humiliate.

FLUNK, *vit.* To fail a course. (Common in college slang.)

FOURTH-YEAR PRIVATE, *n.* A senior without cadet rank.

FROG, *n.* A first-semester freshman. (Since the war the tri-semester plan has been in use at A. and M. A freshman who starts any term other than the fall semester is called a *frog* for the first semester; after that he becomes a *fish.*)

F—K BOOKS, *n.* Sexy pulp magazines.

F—K STORE, *n.* Campus book and general supply store.

G.I., *n.* Government issued equipment. BV.

GIG, *n.* A demerit; a demerit that is not counted against an Aggie on his permanent record. (G: An unfavorable report. K: demerit.)

G.I. SACK, *n.* Blouse issued to freshmen and sophomores.

GO ACROSS THE RIVER, *vit.* To go across the river to Burleson County to purchase whiskey, since Brazos County, in which A. and M. is located, is 'dry.'

GOLDBRICK, *n.* A slacker; one who shirks duty. (G: One who gets by without doing his share of work.)

GOOBER GREASE, *n.* Peanut butter.

GRAB A BRACE, *vt.* Come to attention (a command). (G: Brace: Exaggerated position of attention. The Aggie expression no doubt is related.)

GREASE, *n.* Butter. BV.

GRAB POOCH, *vt.* (A command.) To get in position to receive licks.

GRADE POINT COURSE, *n.* A course in which grade points are easily made.

GUN WADDING, *n.* Bread. (BV: Gunwaddin' bread. An Aggie does not use *gun wadding* as an adjective.)

G.P., *n.* General principles.

HANDLE, *n.* A title, such as 'fish' or 'mister,' used before a name. Aggies regularly use titles in addressing one another in more 'formal' circumstances; upper classmen are addressed as 'mister' by freshmen, and upper classmen call freshmen by their correct title, 'frog' or 'fish.' It is expected of freshmen that they introduce themselves to any stranger on the campus, whether a student or visitor. A freshman dashes up to such a person, sometimes at very inopportune moments: 'Fish Smith is my name.'

HARD NOSE, *n.* R.A. (q.v.) 'I got the hard nose.' (BV: adj., obstinate, stubborn.) *adj.* Peeved or angry. 'I am getting the hard nose on this machine.'

HE PISSED (or PEED) ME OFF. An expression used of a person who in any way disappointed the speaker.

HEAD IN, *adj.* Stupid.

HEAD UP YOUR ASS, *adj.* Stupid, ab-

sent-minded. (Sometimes 'Head in your ass.' Both expressions are frequently replaced by merely 'Head in,' above.)

HEAVEN, *n.* T.S.C.W. (Texas State College for Women, where Aggies like to go over the week-ends.)

HOLD UP THE WALL, *v.* (A hazing stunt.) To squat with your back against the wall.

HOLE, *n.* An Aggie's room.

HORIZONTAL ENGINEERING, *vit.* To nap. (BV: *horizontal exercise* for to nap.)

HORSE FEED, *n.* Corn. (BV: *Horse* or *rabbit food* for salad or greens.)

HOSE, *vit.* To cheat or to try very hard to beat or win. 'Are you hosing the marble machine?' To get everything out, probably from 'to drain the (gas) hose.'

HRDLICKA'S, *n.* A restaurant, close to the campus, serving beer. Pronounced as *hard liquors* by the Aggies.

HUMP IT, *v.* To bend over during yell practice. At pep rallies, *yell practice* in Aggie Slang, freshmen stand close together and bend over, staying in that position during the entire yell practice.

HUNDRED PER CENTER, *n.* A good Aggie; one who observes all customs and traditions without demur.

ICE CREAM PANTS, *n.* Pearl gray colored trousers and slacks worn by seniors.

JACK, *n.* Cavalry insignia.

JOCK SWABBER, *n.* A member of the cavalry.

KAYDET, *n.* A student at A. and M. BV.

LATE LIGHTS, *n.* Privilege of lights after taps.

LUBE, *n.* Gravy.

MAGGOTS, *n.* Macaroni; rice.

MEAL HOUND, *n.* 'An Aggie who takes food from tables other than his own, a freshman privilege.' C. An upper classman will send a freshman to another table to get some food which the upper classman wants; the freshman is then called a *meal hound* by other students.

MILITARY, *n.* A hospital excuse to miss physical training or drill. (Probably because this was at one time the only excuse accepted by the military department.)

MUD, *n.* Chocolate milk or cocoa. (BV: coffee.)

MUSH, *n.* Hot cooked cereal.

NON-REG, *adj.* Non-regulation, in relation to clothes, for instance.

O.B.B., *n.* One Button Boy—Cadet Second Lieutenant.

O.D., *n.* (1) Officer of the Day. (2) Regulation clothes. *adj.* Olive Drab (color of army uniforms). BV.

O.G., *n.* Officer of the Guard. BV.

OLD LADY, *n.* Roommate.

ON THE LINE, *adj.* 'To be on that imaginary line that marks good discipline.' C.

ONE-WAY CORPS TRIP, *n.* Scholastic dismissal.

PADDLEFEET, *n.* Infantrymen. K.

PEEHEAD, *n.* A title for a sophomore.

PENCIL ENGINEERING, *n.* 'The arbitrary addition of that certain difference to a wrong answer to make it look correct.' C.

PINKUS TUCKUS, *n.* R.A. (q.v.).

PISSHEAD, *n.* A title for a sophomore.

POPEYE, *n.* Spinach. (*Popeye* is mentioned in a brief note on soldier language in *Newsweek*, XVI, 40 [Nov. 18, 1940]. BV: Popeye special.)

POST, *vt.* To make a grade. 'What did you post?' 'I posted two A's, a B, and a C.' (Instructors at A. and M. post the grades of the students at the end of the term on the door of the classroom in which the class met; consequently, *post* acquired this connotation peculiar to the Aggie.)

TO PRAY FOR RAIN, *v.* A hazing stunt. Freshmen are asked to stand outside of the dormitory extending their arms upward as if praying, while upper classmen from windows of the upper stories pour buckets of water on the freshmen.

PREXY'S MOON, *n.* A light on top of the Academic Building.

PRINCE OF WALES CLUB, *n.* 'Imaginary organization of cavalry cadets who have been thrown from their horses.' C. (Derived from the Prince of Wales, now the Duke of Windsor, who had received considerable publicity for accidents in steeple-chasing.)

PULL YOUR HEAD OUT, *v.* 'Pay attention to what you are doing.'

PUNCH, *n.* A concoction consisting of ice, soda water, Coca-Cola, lemons, and whiskey, served in a large glass bowl and sipped through straws by a small group of Aggies on certain festive occasions.

P.O., *n.* Post Office.

QUEER, *n.* (1) 'An individual with eccentricities, especially if geniusly inclined.' C. (2) An exceptionally good student. Compounds: Chem queer, grade point queer. (*Queer* does not have the usual sexual connotations characteristic of slang vocabularies.)

R.A. (RED ASS), *n.* 'Despondency, as only an Aggie can get it.' C.

RABBIT, *n.* Salad. (BV: *Horse* or *rabbit food* for salad or greens.)

RACK 'EM BACK, *vit.* To reprimand. 'To give him a good going over; put him in his place.'

RAMS, *n.* Demerits.

REG, *n.* Syrup. (From *regulation color.*)

REST, *vit.* Be quiet. (A command.)

REV or REVEILLE, *n.* 'The only co-ed at A. and M.; the dog mascot.' C. (A dog which the Aggies found, 1931, in a crippled condition. They took the dog to the Veterinary Medicine Hospital, and upon her recovery she continued to live on the campus, eating in the mess hall and sleeping in the dormitories. Because the dog barked regularly in the mornings at reveille, she was named Reveille. Reveille died on January 18, 1944, and was buried with full military honors beside the football field.)

ROCKS, *n.* Ice.

ROSY RECTUM, *n.* R.A. (q.v.). 'Freshmen don't have the privilege of having the Red Ass; so they have this.'

ROOM DOG, *n.* Roommate.

R.H.I.R. Rank Hath Its Responsibilities. (Probably after R.H.I.P. [Rank Hath Its Privileges], attributed to West Point in G.)

SALAAM, *vit.* A hazing stunt. At the command of upper classmen freshmen imitate Mohammedans in prayer by kneeling on the ground and bowing in unison with hands over heads, shouting at the same time, 'Allah! Allah! Allah!'

SAND, *n.* Salt. BV. (Herbert Yenne, 'Prison Lingo,' *American Speech,* II, 280 [March, 1927]: sugar.)

SAND AND, *n.* Salt and pepper.

SATCH, *n.* Campus cop.

SAWDUST, *n.* Sugar.

SBISA VOLUNTEERS, *n.* Aggie waiters in Sbisa Hall (dining hall). (Named after Ross Volunteers, a military organization.)

SCABS, *n.* Flaky cereals.

SENIOR BOOTS, *n.* Riding boots, which are worn by seniors only.

SHOOT, *vt.* To pass. 'Shoot the grease.'

SHOOT THE BULL, *v.* To use bull-like conversation. See *bull.* BV.

SHORT, *n.* 'An Aggie cigarette, one which has been shared with another Aggie.' C.

SHOT, *n.* An individual of high rank or position.

SHOTGUN, *n.* Pepper sauce.

SHIT LICK, *n.* An unfair lick in hazing.

SHOVEL, *n.* Spoon.

SIGNAL CRAPPERS, *n.* Signal Corps.

SILVER TAPS, *n.* Taps as a tribute to a deceased Aggie. The ritual is held at eleven o'clock at night, soon after the death has occurred. Only upon rare occasions is an ex-student honored. Six buglers play taps from the dome of the Academic Building, while members of the corps gather in front of the building and stand at attention. The organization of which the deceased was a member forms a body and salutes while taps are played three times. All lights in the dormitories are turned out for the ceremony.

SING SING ON THE BRAZOS, *n.* The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, located about three miles from the Brazos River.

SKIP, *n.* Driver of a taxi or bus.

SKY, *n.* Water. (BV: Sky-juice.)

THE SLAB, *n.* Concrete, open-air dance floor on the campus.

SLICK-SLEEVE, *n.* A sophomore or junior without non-commissioned officer's stripes on his sleeves.

SLICK-SHOULDER, *n.* A senior without cadet officer's insignia on his shoulder.

SLIP STICK, *n.* A slide-rule. BV.

SOUR, *n.* Lemon. (BV: Vinegar.)

SOCIALITE, *n.* 'An Aggie who definitely leans toward the night club side of college life.' C. (BV: Society person.)

SOUPY, *n.* Mess call. BV.

SOUR RABBIT, *n.* Pickles and onions, served in the mess hall with hamburgers.

SPUDS, *n.* Potatoes. BV.

STINK BOMBERS, *n.* 'Those chem queers, the Chemical Warfare cadets.' C.

STOOP, *n.* A dormitory floor. (The structure of the inside stairs in dormitories at A. and M. must have reminded someone of a stoop as defined in Webster.)

STUD, *n.* (1) Tea. (2) 'A nick-name for one of our buddies.'

SUCK, *n.* Personal influence.

SUCKASS, *n.* 'One who tries to get on the good side of the teacher to get a better grade than he deserves.' *vit.* To curry favor. BV.

SUCK-STRAP, *n.* A shoulder strap worn with senior Sam Browne belt.

SUGAR REPORT, *n.* 'That sweet letter from the girl friend.' (G: A letter from a girl.)

SULLY, *n.* The statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross, an early president of A. and M., which stands in front of the Academic Building.

SUNSHINE, *n.* Carrots or carrots and peas.

SWEAT, *vt.* To concentrate on a course. 'I am sweating him for a grade.' *vit.* To wait in suspense for that over which one has no control. 'I must sweat this out.' (BV: To work hard. William G. McChesney, 'How to Get Along in the Army,' *American Magazine,* CXXXI, 25 [January, 1941], defines *sweat:* to expect. G: Anticipate.)

SWEETSTUFF, *n.* Jelly or preserves.

TEASIPPER, *n.* A student at the University of Texas.

TESSIELAND, *n.* T.S.C.W. See *heaven.* (Formed by analogy with *Aggieland.*)

TEXAS AGGIE, n. Publication of the Association of Former Students.

THUMBING, *n.* 'Aggie transportation system, hitch-hiking.' (BV: Thumb it [to hitch-hike].)

TIMBER, *n.* Toothpick.

TOP-KICK, *n.* First sergeant. BV.

TWELFTH MAN, *n.* 'That portion of the Aggies not actually engaged in an athletic contest but which backs the team spiritually.' C.

TWO PER CENT, *n.* 'That two per cent of the student body which does not display true Aggie spirit.' C.

TWO PER CENTER, *n.* A person who does not display true Aggie spirit.

T.S., *n.* Hard luck. (From *tough shit.* K: A tough situation.)

T.S. CARD, *n.* A response that an Aggie may make to another's hard luck story: 'Do you want me to punch your T.S. card?'

TUB, *n.* Bowl.

UP-STREAM, *vit.* To be unethical in hitch-hiking by thumbing a ride ahead of an already waiting group of hitch-hikers.

UP-STREAMER, *n.* One who is unethical in hitch-hiking.

WEED, *n.* Cigarette. BV.

WET-HEAD, *n.* Sophomore.

WINCHESTER, *n.* Worchestershire Sauce.

WORMS, *n.* Macaroni; spaghetti. BV.

MR. BYINGTON'S BRIEF CASE (IV)

WHITTIER'S RHYMES

I WANT to protest against Mrs. McEuen's article on Whittier's rhymes (*American Speech,* February 1945, pp. 51-57) so far as its language implies that the rhymes she speaks of are in general of inferior quality. She does, indeed, say things that might correct this impression. She closes with the judgment that most of them follow the 'freedom of earlier English verse'; she says that Whittier gets results 'ofttimes effective' by a certain type of allegedly imperfect rhyme on which she quotes Untermeyer's judgment that the device is 'one of the most valuable in extending the gamut of tonal effects'; she remarks that 'examples of rhymes as bad as or worse than Whittier's may be cited from a long list of major poets.' Yet she habitually designates these rhymes of his as bad, varying 'bad' with plenty of synonyms; and she persistently assumes that it is preferable, where we have the option, to assume an aberrant pronunciation rather than an inexact rhyme. (On the other hand, she neglects aberrant pronunciation where it makes the rhyme inexact. Thus she expressly calls Whittier's rhyme of *home* and *Rome* 'perfect,' tho it cannot be doubted that Whittier as a good New Englander gave *home* the short closed vowel, so that the rhyme in question is about like

> A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food

or

> And so she weaveth steadily,
> And little other care hath she,
> The lady of Shalott,

or something of that sort.)

The fact is that to call inexact rhymes bad, false, imperfect, limping, etc., is misleading or at least question-begging. Instead of saying that many major poets have used bad rhymes, it would be more correct to say that no first-class poet in the English language has tried to confine himself to exact rhyme; that so far as any English poets who have undertaken to use only exact rhymes can be found, they must be sought among the minor or even the obscure poets; that English poets use inexact rhymes as a means for getting more melodious effects than they could have got by never using any rhymes but exact ones.

Inexact rhyme is practised not only by poets of the highest intellectual eminence but by those whose reputation is especially for the melodiousness of their verse; and it is used in poems that bear a special reputation

for melody. Rossetti's translation of Villon's *Ballad of Dead Ladies,* for instance, ranks as a special tour de force of sweet sound. It begins thus:

> Tell me now in what hidden way is
> Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
> Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
> Neither of them the fairer woman?
> Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
> Only heard on river and mere,
> She whose beauty was more than human?
> But where are the snows of yester-year?

Way is and *Thais* differ in final consonant; *Roman, woman, no man,* and *human* no two of them rhyme exactly in vowels. The rest of the poem divides almost evenly between exact rhyme and inexact. And, I repeat, it has won the reputation of being peculiarly musical.

Another show piece is a hymn by Dean Alford, versifying a passage of Isaiah. In each quatrain all four lines are exact rhymes except in the first; therefore we must understand that all four lines of the first quatrain rhyme together:

> Earth is passed away and gone,
> All her glories, every one,
> All her pomp is broken down;
> God is reigning, God alone!

Alford, to be sure, is not very famous as a poet; but at least he is a good representative of upper-class English culture.

Longfellow had special expertness in rhyming, and his *Warden of the Cinque Ports* is a notable display of the musical effect of frequent inexact rhymes. On the rhyme of *warrior* and *destroyer* in that poem it should be remarked for the benefit of Westerners, first, that no New Englander would fail to sound the first *r* of *warrior* as a consonant; secondly, that no New England *r* is ever so aggressively 'canine' a consonant as the *r* of some regions.

Of *wind* Mrs. McEuen says, 'Whittier is but following convention when, using a long obsolete pronunciation, he rhymes it with *behind, blind,* and *find.*' This is indeed the customary account, not only in schoolrooms but, for instance, in the *NED.* But when she mentions *blind* she is probably thinking of Whittier's lines

> The shrieking of the mindless wind,
> The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind.

Here it is a cardinal point that if we pronounce *wind* as exact rhyme for *blind* we at the same time make it an exact rhyme for the first syllable of *mindless.* To my ear it would be a severe shock to have *mindless wind* have the undesired perfect rhyme given by sounding *i* alike in both words,

while it is no shock to have *wind* in its ordinary pronunciation rhyme with *blind.* In her next paragraph she registers Whittier's rhymes of *rise* with *deities* and the like. Would those who want to pronounce *wind* as an exact rhyme for *find* wherever a poet rhymes the two words wish to do the same with Shakspere's *Rosalind* in order that the series of lines rhyming with her name might have exact rhyme? There exists also a schoolroom tradition to pronounce *shone* with open *o* in the case of such rhymes as Whittier's with *whereupon;* I think Miss McEuen is right in not adopting this tradition, tho she mentions the existence of the variant pronunciation. Compare the lines I quote from Alford.

But she is surely not justified in saying that he rhymes different vowel sounds in rhyming *view* and *to,* etc. These words being pronounced [vju:] and [tu:], the vowel sound is identical and the rhyme is exactly like that of *young* and *tongue* or of *years* and *tears.* And when the [ju:] is spelled with a mere *u* it still remains an exact rhyme for *oo,* as in *refuse* and *noose.* This is no more a case of rhyming different vowels than *six* and *picks* is a case of rhyming different consonants.

MORE WORDS FROM COOPER'S WORKS

A few words from Cooper's *The Prairie* (1827):

Chapter 1, next to last page: ' "Stranger, if you are much acquainted in this country," said the leader of the emigrants, "can you tell a traveller where he may find necessaries for the night?" '

We say *acquainted with* persons or things in the broadest way; but when acquainted is followed not by *with* but by an expression of place, we mean people. Here it means knowledge of the topography. Some years ago I read a boys' story in which a boy offered to work his passage through Long Island Sound by piloting a schooner that wanted a pilot with local knowledge. The captain asked, 'Are you well acquainted along the coast?' meaning, in accordance with his local dialect (I forget on which side of the Canadian boundary), do you know the landmarks and lights, the safe and unsafe places? The boy understood 'do you know plenty of the right sort of residents?' and answered 'yes' on that understanding, though he did not see any motive for the question. But he would have said 'yes' if he had understood the question as it was meant, and he made good on his job.

Chapter 12, second page: 'We are disagreeable about his camping on the prairie, instead of coming in to his own bed.' For this use of *disagreeable* to express 'uneasy for fear all is not well,' compare the *NED* quotation from Peter Parley (American) in 1844.

Chapter 26, two sevenths of the way through: 'Nothing could be more

simple and republican than the form of living that the ambitious and powerful Teton chose to exhibit to the eyes of his people.' The locution *republican simplicity* is doubtless older than our analogous, but not quite identical, use of *democratic.*

Chapter 27, five ninths of the way through: this same Teton now 'betrayed the more predominant temper of a tyrant.' Apparently *predominant* means 'domineering.'

We popularly express a long lapse of time by *since Hector was a pup.* It is not particularly common to have a dog named Hector; anybody can readily name several names that are oftener given to dogs. But in *The Prairie* Leatherstocking's very old dog Hector plays a persistent part; and I remember somewhere in the book the sentence 'Hector's mother was a pup then.' Can our present phrase originate from Cooper's story?

The death of Leatherstocking, at the end of the book, is the original of Thackeray's famous scene in which the dying Colonel Newcome answers 'Adsum' to some roll-call not heard by others. I say 'the original' not only because Cooper was earlier than Thackeray, but because there can be no doubt that Thackeray knew Cooper's scene: Cooper's books were always popular in England, and I believe Thackeray in the *Roundabout Papers* speaks especially of loving them.

SOME NOTES ON 'AMERICAN SPEECH' FOR OCTOBER, 1945

Several things in *American Speech* for October, 1945, catch my eye.

Mr. Minton thinks that the use of the Spanish spelling *Alegro* rather than the Italian *Allegro* as the name of a New York apartment house calls for a 'sic.' It is not so strange. The city has many Italians, of immigration more recent than the Irish and the Germans; and recent immigrants, from whatever country they come, are not usually rich; hence an Italian-looking name does not seem patrician in New York. But New York has not many Spanish immigrants, and it associates Spanish names with the haunts of people rich enough to go away for the winter. Therefore the preference for giving an apartment house a Spanish name rather than an Italian one is perfectly normal snobbery. The very large Spanish element in Mr. Minton's lists is easily seen.

And he suggests that *Swannanoa* is an 'original exercise in euphony.' I do not suppose the namer of the house was unconscious of the mellifluous syllables; but he did not invent the name, and he may well have thought the name had an upper-class suggestion because the famous Vanderbilt estate of Biltmore is on the Swannanoa River.

Miss Klipple says that the general American pronunciation of *on* is [ɑn], not [ɔn]. How general is it? In my Vermont youth, New York early

manhood, and Massachusetts main years the only pronunciation I have known has been [ɔn], tho in the bookish word *upon* I have the [ɑ] sound. She says the pronunciation of her own Texas is [ɔn]. A usage that is current in New England, New York, and Texas may be supposed to extend to a good many other states. Krapp says both pronunciations are current, but does not say which is the more used. Miss Klipple may well have met persons who commented on [ɔn] as a Texanism because they supposed their own [ɑn] to be general; it need not follow that they were right.

Mr. Costanzo notes it as strange that our troops in Algeria, a French-speaking country, used the form *vino* rather than *vin;* he queries possible origins for the use. At the time of the Filipino war of 1899-1902 I understood that during that war the form *vino* became quite current in the American army. Did it survive in the regular army for forty years (with some refreshment of memory during Woodrow Wilson's incursions into Mexico), and was the usage of the regular army in this respect able to dominate the usage of our whole expeditionary force in Algeria? It does not seem impossible. Mr. Costanzo notes that in Italy our men all called a *signorina* a *señorita.*

Mr. McAtee explains *barn-door trousers* as trousers with a fall (see *fall* 5 b in the *DAE).* In my adolescence, about 1885, my father was getting me a mail-order suit from Wanamaker's in Philadelphia, and we found that the circular said that there would be an additional charge of fifty cents if broad fall trousers were demanded. I did not know what those might be, but my father explained them to me. Presumably the adjective *broad* was added because *fall trousers* would have seemed to mean trousers to be worn in the fall.

SOME WORDS FROM 'CANAL TOWN'

In Samuel Hopkins Adams's story *Canal Town* (1944), a tale of the early 1820's on the Erie Canal, the anachronisms and similar malefactions are beyond enumeration. Nevertheless, the book has drawn much of its local color and antiquarianism from actual sources. It is evidently right in making its schoolgirls use *cruel* as an intensive of all work just as their successors sixty years later used *awful;* it is therefore likely to be right (except for the possibility of a few years' anachronism) when it makes those same schoolgirls use *dicty* with what seems to be about the meaning of the present-day *nifty,* and when it uses *hoggee* as a canal technicality, defined thus on p. 380: 'the towpath. Here plodded the hoggees, the friendless apprentice boys, taken on under indenture for the season, neglected or maltreated, and turned off at the close of traffic

with ten dollars for their total wage—if, indeed, they were not mulcted of that by pretext or bullying. Whatever the weather, they must trudge behind their tandem. . . . They were orphans, foundlings, bastards, halfbreeds, ranging from a precocious fourteen to a backward twenty-one years of age.'

SOME RAILROAD TERMS

When a train is said to *run express* from Blackville to Whiteville, it is hard to say whether *express* is noun, adjective, or adverb. The *NED,* supplement volume, decides for adverb. Apparently this use of *express* would never have got into either the *NED* or the *DAE* if it had remained confined to railroad trains; but when it was applied to an elevator it caught the *NED*'s eye. The correlative expressions *run local* and *run accommodation* are not yet in the dictionaries; but it is quite ordinary for a train of an important railroad to run local for part of its distance and express for the other part, whereby, if it begins local, it gathers up for some distance along its way the passengers from the various stations, and then transports them with express promptness to a distant destination which they are likely to have in common; or if it begins express, it carries in that fashion the passengers destined for a certain stretch of track, and then distributes them to the several stations along that stretch.

Dictionaries, including Horwill's *Modern American Usage,* seem confused over the relation between *local train, accommodation train,* and *mixed train.* The first two are synonyms, both being familiar colloquially but the shorter being preferred in official railroad documents; either of them means a train which stops at every station or at most of the stations. The phrase *run accommodation* is less common than *run local,* but you may well hear that the train runs express as far as Omicron and then accommodation from there to Omega. A mixed train is one that has freight cars and a passenger car (or, less often, more than one passenger car). A mixed train can generally be expected to run accommodation all the way, but it does not by a long way follow that every accommodation train will be a mixed train; a first-class railroad will run many accommodation trains that are purely passenger, but no mixed trains at all or comparatively few.

'SUGAR TREE'

Solving a double-crostic puzzle, I have to identify *'Acer Saccharum* (2 words).' As a native of Vermont I have no difficulty in guessing *rock maple,* with *hard maple* as second choice, since *sugar maple* is impossible because I am restricted to nine letters. But neither of these will serve,

and the intent turns out to be *sugar tree*. I am provoked into consulting the *DAE* to find out how much the name has been used, and where; and I judge that it has been used much, but always farther west than Vermont, tho the quotation from Cooper under *sugar* carries it pretty near to the Vermont line. Michaux, who is quoted for *black sugar tree*, botanized in Vermont, but one may cavil as to just how much actual usage his words imply; at most he might rank, along with Cooper, as attestation for the usage of a very early date.

By the way, the present-day Vermonter's name for the area of maples that are tapped for sugar is hardly ever *sugar bush* or (despite the *DAE*'s 1874 Vermont quotation) *sugar grove*, but quite regularly *sugar orchard*. Ellipsis of *sugar* ('he has an orchard of about 1200 trees') is not uncommon when the context makes the application clear.

'LECTURE-DAY' AND 'MONTHLY CONCERT'

In Trumbull's *McFingal*, near the end of canto 2, the people streamed out of the town meeting at a noise outside,

> And left the church in thin array,
> As tho' it had been lecture-day.

In Benson J. Lossing's edition of the poem (1881) his note on this passage is: 'On some day in the week previous to the administration of the Lord's Supper in the New England Churches, a sermon was preached which was called a lecture, and that day was known as lecture-day. These lectures were generally very thinly attended; a fact here alluded to by the poet.' The *DAE* does not recognize this relation between the lecture and the communion service; and indeed it would seem by some of the *DAE* quotations that in early times the 'lecture' in the sense of a week-day sermon was not confined to that occasion. Both Lossing and the *DAE* speak of the institution as obsolete, and at present it may be so; but when Lossing wrote that note my father was still preaching the 'preparatory lecture' (this two-word phrase was technical in my boyhood) at a daylight hour on Thursday before each communion in his Vermont parish. The parish was conservative enough so that a death in the community was still announced as soon as it took place by the statistical tolling of the church bell, nine strokes for a man, six for a woman, three for a child, then a pause and one stroke for each year of the age of the deceased. I am fairly confident that the *DAE* quotations under *lecture day* refer to the 'preparatory' lecture.

The preparatory lecture reminds me of another institution of my memory, the *monthly concert*. This was not a musical occasion, but was short for 'monthly concert of prayer for missions.' It was the natural

occasion for communicating missionary news to those members of the church who did not read missionary periodicals; and for many years the *Missionary Herald* carried every month a short index headed 'For the Monthly Concert,' listing the most outstanding news of the month, such as gave most motive for intercession. The dictionaries do not list *concert of prayer,* a united prayer made by many persons at once in order to secure a favor from God; but *concert of prayer* used to be a standard religious phrase, I guess on both sides of the ocean, and I think it likely that the phrase is still current in those parts of the United States where prayer, in the sense recognized by the Bible and the dictionaries, is not yet out of fashion.

STEVEN T. BYINGTON

Ballard Vale, Massachusetts

JOTTINGS

Ernie Pyle reported some interesting examples of folk-etymology in his war dispatch of July 3, 1944: 'The names of a lot of French towns in our area are tongue-twisters for our troops, so the towns quickly became known by some unanimous application of Americanese. For instance, Bricquebec is often called *Bricabrac.* And Isigny was first known as *Insignia* but has now evolved into *Easy Knee,* which is closer to the French pronunciation.'

The expression *honey-swoggle* used by Senator Tom Connally of Texas is explained by him as an old slang expression of temporizing, procrastinating, playing around. It sounds like an amalgam word. The *Thesaurus of Slang* does not enter it, but has *honeyfogle* both as noun and verb in the sense of 'blarney, flattery, deceit.' *Hornswoggle* is given several meanings in the *Thesaurus,* 'nonsense, deceit' as a noun, and 'to deceive or render ridiculous' as a verb.

The *Consumer's Guide* (July 15, 1945, p. 6) told how to make *pedalers*—bicycle shorts—from GI pants. In *She* magazine Doris Frazer stated that *pedal pushers* have become a nation-wide style for girls to wear for active sports. She described them thus: 'Pedal pushers are those short trousers that end just below the knees. Some come in the loudest plaid wool you ever saw. Some are plain grey flannel.'

Horace Colley, who makes over fur coats, etc., at his home in Lincoln, Nebraska, has been allowed by the City Council to establish a *'Fur Studio'* on South Eleventh Street. His should be added to the various other types of 'studios' in existence of late years.

SOME NOTES ON RHYMING ARGOT

SIR ST VINCENT TROUBRIDGE
London, England

I CONSIDER that I can probably make a contribution to the ascertainment of the origin of some of the examples given as doubtful between English and American in Mr. D. W. Maurer's article on 'Australian' rhyming argot in *American Speech* for October, 1944.

Briefly, my qualifications for doing so are that as a young officer I served from 1914 to 1922 in a Regiment of the British Army exclusively Cockney in its area of recruitment. During that period, especially in the first four wartime years, there were the unrivalled opportunities of trench-life for getting to know the habits of thought and expression of one's men, sharpened, in the case of rhyming slang, if one's individual interests were already inclining towards philology or word study.

The argument then is as follows: As rhyming slang is admittedly English (predominantly Cockney), and more than a century old, there is, in this particular field, scant probability of any borrowings from the American—the whole tide runs the other way, via Australia.

Thus, where Mr. Maurer is in doubt of the origin of a particular word, it will be pertinent if my Cockney riflemen used that word habitually thirty years ago; the word will almost surely be English in origin.

Similarly, if Mr. Maurer puts forward a rhyming expression as probably American in origin, and my men used a different rhyme to convey the same word, his assumption of American origin is almost certainly correct.

To give one example. Mr. Maurer has RED HOT CINDER, 'a winder (window),' noted as origin uncertain, either American or English. Now my Cockneys in those old days would not have dreamed of using anything but POLLY FLINDERS (incidentally the name of the heroine of the English Christmas pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe;* note how many rhyming slang words are derived from the theatre) for window, so I contend that of Mr. Maurer's two possibilities, RED HOT CINDER is probably of American origin.

It must, however, be conceded that my case is weakened to the extent that rhyming slang in England glories in synonyms, and that probably half the words in its simple vocabulary have alternative rhyming equivalents.

My notes are set out alphabetically below, Mr. Maurer's suggested origin being in the parentheses immediately following the word.

BASIN CROP. A haircut. (Used in Australia, probably originally Australian.) This word does not appear to be rhyming slang at all. The kind of haircut provided by placing a pudding basin on the head, and cropping the hair extruded

round the edges, still persists in communities living under primitive conditions, such as armies on active service.

BEES AND HONEY. Money. (Origin uncertain, probably English. *Pot o' honey* in Cockney slang.) Almost certainly English origin, and current to this day. I have heard *bees and honey* ten times for every use of *pot o' honey*.

BONNY FAIR. Hair. (Origin uncertain, but probably American.) This is certainly a mistake. The word in rhyming slang is *Barnet Fair*, named after the most famous horse fair in England, held at Barnet, in Hertfordshire, for four hundred years. This is English, but an interesting example of verbal corruption.

BOWL OF CHALK. Talk. (Origin uncertain, but probably American.) Agreed. My men used *lump of chalk*, through *Duke of York* was commoner still.

CHEVY CHASE. The face. (England, 1857. Now obs. in England.) This is by no means obsolete; it is still the most common rhyming slang word for face.

DERBY KELLEY. The belly. (Origin uncertain, but probably American.) This is English, though the usual spelling is *Kelly*. Probably from some mid-nineteenth century individual of criminal fame in Derbyshire. The *Derby* would appear to be conclusive as to origin.

DIP SOUTH. The mouth. (Origin uncertain, American or English.) This is American. I have never heard anything except *north and south* from Englishmen.

DUKE OF CORK. A talk; a walk. (English.) Agreed as English, but always *Earl of Cork*. This corresponds to an actual title in the British peerage, held by a well-known and definitely eccentric nobleman during the period (1870-1890) of the maximum growth of rhyming slang.

EAST AND WEST. The vest. (Origin uncertain, but probably English.) Probably American. The vest is an undergarment in English. Cf. *Charley Prescot* in Maurer's article.

FIDDLE AND FLUTE or FIDDLE. A suit of clothes. (Origin uncertain, but probably English.) Agreed as English, but always *whistle and flute*. The word *fiddle* alone has its own slang meaning, especially as a verb, *viz.*, to obtain by illicit means, generally including bribery or petty crime. Very near the American 'graft.'

FIFTEEN AND TWO. A Jew. (Origin uncertain, but probably American.) Almost certainly American. The English is *five to two*, from the betting odds against horses.

FORTY-FOUR. A whore. (Origin uncertain, but probably American.) Almost certainly American. The English is *five to four*, or *six to four*, from the betting odds against horses.

HALF-A-LICK. Sick. (Origin uncertain, but probably American.) Agreed. The English equivalent is *Uncle Dick*.

HERE AND THERE. A chair. (Origin uncertain, but probably English.) This is doubted. *Lord Mayor* was always used. See also *I declare* and *I don't care*, in Maurer's list.

HICKORY DOCK. A clock. (Origin uncertain, American or English.) Probably American in this form. The English is *Dickory Dock*, from the old English nursery rhyme. Another example of word corruption.

I DESIRE. A fire. (English, 1900.) *Anna Maria* is ten times as usual. The best known poem in rhyming slang begins:

As I sat in front of the Anna Maria,
Warming me plates of meat,
There came a knock at the Rory O'More
That made me old raspberry beat.

JOHNNY SKINNER. Dinner. (Origin uncertain, probably American.) Agreed. The English equivalent is *Lilley and Skinner*, after a well-known firm of boot manufacturers with many retail shops.

KIDNEY PIE. The eye (not recorded in the plural). (Origin uncertain, American, or British.) Almost certainly American. *Mince pies* is the invariable English word.

LEAN AND LAKE. A steak. (Origin doubtful, probably English.) Very rare if English. *Joe Blake* was quite invariable for this.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER. Water. (Origin doubtful, probably English.) This again, if English, is rare. I have never

heard anything except *ratcatcher's daughter* (from a popular song of the 1850's), or *didn't ought ter.*

OCEAN WAVE. A shave. (English.) Also rare, if English. Both *mariner's grave* and *digging the grave* are more usual.

PAT MALONE. Alone. (Australian, rare.) Agreed. The English equivalent is *Mike Malone,* also commonly clipped back to *on one's mike,* and also rare.

PEACHES AND PEARS. The stairs. (Origin uncertain, but probably English.) More probably American with its reference to peaches. *Apples and pears* is the common English equivalent.

POT OF GLUE. A Jew. (Origin uncertain, American or English.) Probably American. See *fifteen and two,* above.

ROARY O'MORE. The floor. (Origin uncertain, probably American.) Almost certainly English. Should be *Rory O'More,* probably derived from the tremendously popular song of that name, sung by Madame Vestris in the 1830's and 1840's. Also used for 'door.'

SHOVEL AND BROOM. A room. (Origin uncertain, American or English.) May be American. If British, it is much rarer than *birch broom.*

SIMPLE SIMON. A diamond. (Origin uncertain, probably American.) More probably English. Simple Simon is an old English nursery rhyme.

STRONG AND THIN. Fin. (Origin uncertain, probably English.) Agreed, but rare compared to *Lincoln's Inn* (one of the English legal Inns of Court in London).

TOM TUG. A mug (sucker). (Origin uncertain, probably American.) Almost certainly English. Tom Tug, a young waterman, was a popular character in one of Dibden's operas, c. 1800-1815, with a famous song, 'Farewell, my trim-built wherry.'

'STATESIDE'

Stateside, which Allen Walker Read found in *Yank,* used as an adjective to refer to things back on the American continent (*Saturday Review of Literature,* March 10, 1944), had quite a vogue among GI's. Lt. R. C. Ruark, USNR, wrote in the *Saturday Evening Post* (July 9, 1945, p. 74/2) of 'a Hawaiian print dress . . . which a naval officer had bought for his *Stateside* wife.' Sgt. Leo M. Smith, in a letter to the editor of *New and Views* of General Motors (July, 1945), stated that 'Our liquor is about like the Stateside stuff, except when we run out and have to fall back on the native stuff. . . . We call it Bamboo Juice and one straight will put you in never-never land!'

DOWNHILL WORDS

The New York *Times* ('Topics of the Times,' October 28, 1944), expressed the opinion that *international* has now acquired a special derogatory sense. He cites in illustration the phrases 'international munitions merchants,' 'international spy,' 'international cartels,' etc. *Victory* suffered a similar loss of prestige, it might be added. The 'Victory silver' released by the War Production Board rusted quickly, and *Nation's Business* (November, 1943, p. 90) reported that many customers avoided new products of 'victory construction.'

EDITORIALS AND REVIEWS

TWO BOOKS FOR GERMAN-AMERICANS

THE TWO works here reviewed[1] are addressed to the same audience, the body of German-Americans of recent Continental derivation, and have the same expressed purpose, to guide and aid the reader in adapting himself to the ways, especially the speechways, of America.

Mr. Whyte's *American Words and Ways* is incomparably the more useful of the two. It has three sections, one devoted to the speaking and writing of colloquial American, one to social forms and customs, and one to illustrating salient differences in national characteristics and temperament. The author has wisely placed beyond reproach the comments of the last section—which makes, by the way, fascinating reading—by frankly admitting that 'all generalizations are false' and by urging his readers to ignore anything they consider inapplicable to themselves. I am sure that most readers, while they will find little that personally pertains to them, will discover many amusing sketches of the behavior patterns of their friends and acquaintances.

The section on etiquette provides precisely the guidance that many a German-American has been looking for in vain. I have heard more than once the complaint that our standard books of etiquette give ample information on how to arrange a dinner party for eighteen or how to address an archbishop, but never tell the reader what Americans consider a graceful way to accept an introduction, or where, in our casual way, we draw the line between deference and servility. Mr. Whyte seems to know just what questions the reader will ask, and he answers them very succinctly.

The section on speech habits, with its emphasis on colloquial good form, should prove even more valuable, and not only to German-Americans, but to any one interested in good American English. It should be recommended to the attention of teachers of English, especially those who have an undue reverence for sacred cows. At the same time, teachers of German to American students ought to find it extremely useful for the light it sheds upon parallel, but radically different, points of usage in the two languages. The author approaches his problem with a refreshing lack of dogmatism and with the firm belief that usage is to be

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1. *American Words and Ways, Especially for German Americans.* By John Whyte. New York: The Viking Press, 1943. xi, 184 pp.

Talk American, A Practical Guide for Eliminating a German Accent. By Lewis Herman and Marguerite Shalett Herman. Chicago and New York: Ziff-Davis Publishing Co., 1944. xi, 129 pp.

determined by the practice of educated speakers and writers of the living language, and not by the pronunciamentos of the contrivers of handbooks. The chapters on pronunciation are particularly effective and should induce the critic to view benignly a whimsicality like the assurance that the *th* sound 'can be learned with a little practice' because 'it is . . . not an un-Germanic sound' (p. 14). The only serious error is the instruction to 'drop' a final orthographic *r,* 'as many Germans do.' Since most Germans 'drop' their *r*-phone by producing the retracted central vowel [ɐ] where an American, in 'dropping' his, will produce [ə], the result will be merely to substitute one foreignism for another.

As a whole, however, the book is almost beyond criticism. One can only express in passing the regret that a book which means to inculcate an instinctive sense of good colloquial form should be studded with casual insertions of foreign words, frequently without either quotation marks or italicization: e. g., 'In his Anhang (*sic*) to *Übungen im Englischen Tonfall,* Klinghardt uses so-called Punktbilder (*sic*). . . .' It is difficult to appear as a model of casual elegance with your shirttail hanging out.

The Herman book, which treats solely the problem of the German 'accent,' can be disposed of very briefly. Its material on consonants is accurate and useful. Its material on vowels is to a considerable degree inaccurate and confusing. Moreover, the text is unhappily interspersed with German words in parentheses, which are intended to facilitate reading for native Germans but which, as a result of frequent misprints and glaring errors—e. g., *übergetreibt* as a translation for 'exaggerated'—can only be a source of annoyance and vexation. Actually, Mr. Whyte furnishes most of the same information with a minimum of inaccuracy and in a much more assimilable form.

VICTOR A. OSWALD, JR.

Columbia University

EARLY TEXAS TALK

ONE OF the chief sources for documented examples of Americanisms is our frontier literature of the last century. *Sam Slick in Texas* presents the interesting results of five years' investigation in this field.

Librarian Hoole's work[1] is not about language, but about a man—a Connecticut Yankee named Samuel Adams Hammett, alias Philip Paxton, alias Jared Bunce, alias Sam Slick. Surprisingly little is known of Hammett, although he was the author of three once-popular books and of

1. *Sam Slick in Texas.* By W. Stanley Hoole. San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Co., 1945. xix, 78 pp.

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numerous articles published in the leading American journals of the mid-nineteenth century. One of the books, *The Wonderful Adventures of Captain Priest* (1855), is a Down East story; the other two, *A Stray Yank in Texas* (1853) and *Piney Woods Tavern* (1858), written after Hammett had 'passed some ten or twelve years' in the Southwest between 1835 and 1848, spin tall yarns about frontier life. Hoole has pieced together, in a semi-popular account, the scanty facts of Hammett's life during the roaring 1830's and 1840's in the Republic of Texas. Hoole succeeds in establishing that as a student at the University of the City of New York Hammett showed literary propensity and that as surveyor and pedlar in Texas he was a frequenter of the barroom and tavern, frontier settlements, hunters' rude camps, the stagecoach and the river steamboat.

Linguistically the book is interesting. We can say of it what the editor of the *Knickerbocker Magazine* said of Hammett's *Piney Woods Tavern* in 1859: it gives a good 'illustration of the indigenous oddities of conceits and expressions . . . found in the frontier country of the Southwest. Of the genuineness of the . . . representations of backwoods phraseology, derived as they were from personal experiences in Texas, we suppose there can be no doubt; and for this reason it may be regarded as a sort of verification of Bartlett's *Dictionary of Americanisms.*' There is little here that could not be found more abundantly in Hammett's books themselves. (Two of Hammett's three books were examined by the editors of the *DAE,* and there have been two further studies of Hammett's vocabulary published within the last year in *American Speech.*) Since Hammett's works, however, have become collectors' items, the present volume can be very useful.

There are quotations abounding in such adjectives as *piert* ('pert'), *cute* ('shrewd') *bunkum* ('inefficient'), *plaguy* ('large'); spicy substantives, such as *pewter* ('money'), *quilting* ('whipping'), *sawyer* ('card shark'); archaic verbs, such as *tote* (used intransitively), *hopple* ('hobble'), *quilt* ('flog'); dialectal spellings, such as *arter* (after), *gin* (given), *putty* (pretty), *leetle* (little), *ar'y* (any), *pison* (poison), *war* (were), *druv* (drove); homely proverbial bits of wisdom, such as 'It's allers best for a man to chaw his own tobakker,' 'barkin' up the wrong tree,' 'Consate will kill a man and consate will cure a man.' In keeping with such diction, Hoole's study carries chapter headings such as 'Red-Eye and Old Peach' and 'The Most Owdacious Crittur.'

ERNEST S. CLIFTON

North Texas State College

A LETTER FROM EAST AFRICA TO MR. MENCKEN*

Dear Mr. Mencken,

Your fourth edition of *The American Language,* given to me as a going-away present at the end of a home leave some years ago, not only gave me immense pleasure during the five odd weeks of the sea voyage from New York-to-England-to-Mombasa but has since been my first wrecked-on-a-desert-island book choice. In Uganda it has done the rounds among those English, Scottish and Irish friends who are interested, as I am, in English and (or versus!) American, and it has always been a source of delight when I have not been quite sure what else I wanted to read. One reason for continued enjoyment is that I can always find some new cause for talking back at you, and the margins and fly leaves are cluttered with differences of opinion as well as additions to or confirmations of points you make. A review of Sir William Craigie's *Dictionary of American English* which I read recently, in which your own book is mentioned, has brought the whole subject to my mind again and I am sending these notes off to you while I think of it.

Perhaps to begin with I ought to explain that I come from Hawley (population 900) in northwest Minnesota, where I grew up with Scandinavians for the most part, with a sprinkling of English who were the early settlers there, a few later arriving Scotch-Irish from Ontario, and a very few Irish and Germans who came much later. My own people on my father's side were Scots via Nova Scotia, and my mother, via Ontario, was a quarter Scottish, half Northern Irish, and the other quarter Pennsylvania Dutch, originally from Bavaria at the time of Frederick the Great, and up into Ontario with the United Empire Loyalists at the time of the American Revolution. My father spoke Gaelic as a boy (he read and wrote it all his life) and learned English along with his Latin. So the American I spoke and heard in Clay County until I was eighteen, and in fact in Minnesota generally until I first left America when I was twenty-four, had a very mixed pedigree.

All our Norwegian, Swedish and Danish friends and neighbors without exception said 'Can I go with?' (page 215[1] of your book) instead of 'Can I go with you?' The 'th' was always sounded as in 'think.' They also said, in asking if a certain person was included in, or accompanied others at any gathering, 'Was he with?' or, sometimes, 'Was he along?' Both of

* The Editors of *American Speech* are grateful to Mrs. Mackintosh and to Mr. Mencken for permission to print this letter, originally written in the summer of 1944.

1. Page references are to H. L. Mencken's *The American Language,* fourth edition, New York, 1936.

these expressions were exclusively Scandinavian, and others in town never used them except in quotation marks. With regard to the notes on Norse English from Northfield, Minnesota (page 629), the mere reading of them makes me homesick because they are so exactly typical of what I grew up hearing. Of that same brand of American is a long-lived joke in our family over a remark made over the telephone by the Norwegian father of our local veterinarian when we once had occasion to call him. The vet was notoriously bone lazy and a trial to his old father who, when he answered the telephone in this case, sighed disgustedly down the wire and said, 'Oh, Carl! He iss ligging in de bed som he alvess do!' (Norse *ligge,* 'to lie'; *som,* 'as'). Our Norwegian hired girl said 'malasi' for 'molasses' (page 630), but she was alone in this.

News to the Scandinavians in Hawley always 'stood' in the *Herald,* too (page 215). Expressions like that were often used by the rest of us quite consciously and pseudo-humorously because they amused us, and it is possible that many of the Scandinavians themselves knew better but continued to use them anyway.

I have heard both English and Scots say, 'I don't hold with that idea at all' (page 215), and I can't believe that it is exclusively Scandinavian.

Another hired girl in our house—this time an Irish girl—always used the word 'trong' for 'threw.' It was almost, but not quite, 'trung' as she said it, and it never had the 'th' sound as your note (page 435) has it.

My mother often said when she lost or mislaid something, 'I wonder what went of it?' which meant, of course, 'What became of it?' She laughed at the expression herself, but she had no idea how she came to use it so naturally. I vaguely considered it Canadian, but none of the other Canadians there used it so far as I knew, and since she left Ontario when she was four her Canadian origin hardly explains it. She lived as a child with her Pennsylvania Dutch (Ontario) grandfather, a circuit-riding minister who (beside English, of course) read and spoke German. Could this 'What went of it?' have come to her through the German, or could it have been a Pennsylvania Dutch survival from pre-Revolutionary times in her grandfather's speech, and so to hers?

We always said, as the town still does, 'Who-all was there?' and 'What-all did you do?' Many of the Irish also use 'who-all' and 'what-all.'

As children we asked, 'May we have a piece?' which meant a between-meal snack of bread and butter (usually superimposed with brown sugar, jelly, peanut-butter or anything available, the thicker the better), or a doughnut, a cookie, or a piece of pie or cake. I do not know if this 'piece' is generally American in usage or exclusive to Hawley, where the small fry and their mothers still use it. A Scottish friend tells me that it is heard

in Scotland, and that a 'jelly piece,' which is a jelly sandwich, more or less, is quite commonly carried as a lunch when on a 'shoot.'

We said in Hawley sleighing talk, 'Let's slug around this next bend,' whipped up the horses and skidded with as wide a sweep and swoosh as possible around the curve. 'To slug' an enemy, of course, (sometimes difficult to distinguish from 'to slog') was 'to slosh him one' or 'to sock' him, so it had more than the sleighing meaning. Our seventeen-year-old son, now in St. Paul, could no doubt tell me if the term applies to that particular sleighing technique there, but it is possible that it is another pure Hawley word.

To my intense chagrin my younger sister caught me out in the use of 'rense' for 'rinse' in recent years, but I rather think I would use it only in a concentrated Hawley atmosphere. To me it means only scalding dishes before drying them, but I believe its Hawley meaning is more general than that. We never heard 'rench' there (page 434).

On the whole, I think Hawley would say, 'I drather' for 'I had rather,' and if asked for a snap answer as to what it contracted I am sure it would reply, 'I *would* rather.'

As to 'I wouldn't hadda went' (page 443), I have never heard it, and in spite of Lardner I feel certain that it would be 'I wouldn't a *hadta* went.' Likewise I believe it would be 'I'd a hadta saved more,' instead of 'hadda.' 'I couldn't a done it' sounds perfectly natural to me, and I probably say it myself although of course it would never occur to me to write it.

'A-going' sounded quite foreign to us, as did 'that-a-way,' both of which were used by a Nebraska family which moved into the community.

We heard 'bean' for 'been' only rarely outside our own family. My father's family used it, although we children did not, and we either considered it a Nova Scotia hang-over or connected it in some way with their early Gaelic. The Scandinavians pronounced it 'ben,' which was recognized as one of their peculiarities of speech.

My father's family alone in town said 'oafeese' for 'office,' and they alone burred the 'r's' in my brothers' names. His younger sisters (although he himself did not) pronounced 'spoon' and 'food' with the 'oo' sounded as in 'book.' Both at home an abroad both 'oo' sounds are familiar to me in 'roof,' 'root,' 'spoon' and 'food' (Scots, especially, often give the last two the 'book' sound), 'hoof' and 'hoop,' but my imagination boggles at anything but the 'loop' sound for 'cooper' and 'coop.'

We wore 'tossle' caps as children, certainly never 'tassle' caps, and there were also 'tossles' on the ends of bath-robe cords, but on articles of furniture or other garments they were 'tassles.'

I have heard 'hist' for 'hoist' and 'rile' for 'roil' (page 346) in Minnesota,

but I knew what the proper forms were and felt that the speakers knew and were using quotes.

Children in Hawley studying for confirmation in the Lutheran church under the tuition of the minister always did, and still do, 'read for the minister' (page 215). I have also heard my Swedish sister-in-law say hundreds of times that she would now 'cook the coffee' (page 215), and a cousin who married a Norwegian says it, too, but she at least uses it in quotation marks (after all, she acquired it by marriage only).

'To carry on' in Hawley and generally among Scandinavians in Minnesota means to make a fuss or a scene, as, 'She carried on until we were ashamed of her.' It is also used in relation to a scandalous intrigue, as it is in English—'She has been carrying on with him for years without her husband knowing.' Another common English use, meaning 'to continue,' and that often under difficulties—in other words, 'to stick it out'—is not known to me in America.

Minnesota in general, I feel sure, calls an 'ash can' a 'garbage can' and the man who collects it the 'garbage man' (page 233).

'Chores' (page 234), in Clay County at least, always carried with it a flavor of the barnyard. Milking the cows, currying the horses, cleaning out the barn, feeding, bedding and watering the stock—in fact, all the daily routine jobs in and about the barn constituted 'the chores.' The English use of the word, where it means odd jobs of all sorts, and perhaps the more general American interpretation of it, are not restricted in this way.

An English woman here in Kampala who has lived in New York, San Francisco and (believe it or not!) Cheyenne, told me the other day of being delighted when she first heard in America a refusal of a second helping of food put thus, 'No, thank you. I have had a big plenty.' I immediately argued that her memory must be at fault—that the expression must have been 'a great plenty' (which might have been just as amusing to her at that!). The second form sounds quite natural to me, but I have never heard 'a big plenty' nor have I seen it in print.

The Scotch-Irish Canadians in Hawley commonly said, 'I don't dast' for 'I don't dare.' 'I dasn't' was far more rarely heard.

I believe I have a few words and phrases in my collection which are additional to the ones you list among your American-English differences. Some of mine show only very slight differences but those seem to be absolute. Many on my list are perhaps purely Scottish, and of those some, I think, are Highland only, but we meet them all around the world wherever we meet the Scots themselves, and as there is very little so-called 'accent' in Highland speech in any case, it is difficult to class the words

as merely colloquial. A few of the Anglicisms still seem to me to be plain bad English, even if they are used by products of the great public schools, Oxford, Cambridge *and* the British Broadcasting Corporation. I elaborate somewhat on a few of the differences which your book mentions more briefly.

English	*American*
Fish slice (never heard in U.S.).	Pancake-turner (never heard in English).
Barrow (wheelbarrow also used, but less commonly).	Wheelbarrow.
Out of doors.	Outdoors.
Exchange (telephone).	Central.
Trunk call (telephone).	Long distance.
Face flannel or face cloth (never heard in U.S.).	Wash cloth—wash 'rag' less commonly used.
'I can't stick the woman' (never heard in U.S.).	'I can't stand her' or 'I can't bear her.' Both also used in English.
Denture or plate (the former never heard in U.S.).	False teeth (more rarely, 'plate'). Both used in English, but not as common as 'denture.'
The dental process of cleaning tartar off teeth is called 'scaling' them. (Never used in U.S.)	Same process—the dentist merely 'cleans' them. (Rarely used in English, and if at all it is usually by Colonials.)
Gob (noun) means spittal.	Gob (noun) is a naval rating; also a blob or a large dab. Plural 'gobs' means large quantities, as 'gobs of cream,' as well as more than one sailor, of course.
To gob (verb) means 'to spit.'	'To gob' means to daub liberally, or to dab with large blobs.
To be finished. (Also American.)	In American, common usage is 'to be through,' as 'Are you through with my scissors?' This form is never heard in English.

In almost every instance where Americans use 'around,' the English use would be 'round,'—as 'round the garden,' 'round the town,' 'round the farm' and 'round the house' (although in the latter case the chances are even that it would be 'about the house').

American mothers 'bathe' their babies but in English one 'baths' them. Webster gives the transitive form for 'bath' in addition to 'bathe,' but in spite of him I have still to hear an American mother so much as suggest 'bath'-ing her child.

The English version of 'O Mother, may I go out to swim?' would certainly begin, 'Mother, may I bathe?' Until they become hardened to it, Americans are inclined to be somewhat startled at the English use of 'to bathe' in this sense.

'Quite' in English and American are scarcely related at all. In English it is used as an expression of agreement as we would use 'Exactly,' or

'That's what I say, too.' For example, to the statement, 'I could do a better job myself,' the most natural response in agreement in American would be 'Of course' or 'Exactly.' In English, however, it would be 'Quite,' or 'I quite agree.' Another question and affirmative response in English might be 'Are you quite finished?' and 'Yes, quite.'

In English, to say that the door is 'quite shut' means that it is *really* shut—and that means shut! Similarly, when an Englishman says, 'I tell you, I am quite sick of the whole business,' there is no half-heartedness about his feelings as there would be in an American saying the same thing. The Englishman means that he is sick to death of the business, 'fed to the very teeth' with it, and, in fact, that he can't 'carry on' any longer. Both we and the English might say, ' I am absolutely sick of it,' which would have the above meaning to us all.

American gives 'quite' the meaning of 'entirely' or 'completely' only in the negative, as in 'The door is *not quite* shut.' In such constructions as 'The show is quite good,' 'Sally is quite sunburned' and 'She is quite pretty,' the word in all cases takes on the meaning of 'rather' or ' somewhat'—the praise of the show and the girl's looks is a bit grudging and Sally's sunburn is only so-so. In English there is no such use of the word.

Americans 'blow in' their cash, but if you are English you 'blue' it or 'blew' it. Pronunciation does not indicate which if either spelling is correct, but I have seen both in print. The past tense, difficult as it is to believe, is 'blued' or 'blewed.'

Sirloin' (page 236) in my experience with English cuts of beef refers always to a roast, or as the English usually put it, a certain kind of 'joint.' I have never known it cut into slices as for our porterhouse. The more tender portion at one side of the bone in this 'joint' is known as the 'undercut,' but when this long eel-like undercut is removed whole from the carcas by the butcher, it is then known as the 'fillet.' Cut into steaks, these are then called 'fillet steaks.'

Surely a 'highball' (page 236) is a whiskey and ginger ale?—or have all these years of close association with tropical mixed drinks confused me badly? A whiskey-and-soda *is* just that—whiskey and soda water—but I should hesitate to produce what my Middle West knows as 'highballs' at a Uganda sundowner party as the equivalents of whiskey-and-sodas—always provided, of course, that I could get the whiskey now, in war time! There would most certainly be some startled splutters from guests otherwise too polite to show further surprise at my sudden reversion to type.

English children whizzing around on bicycles and tricycles will warn each other to keep out of the way by shouting 'Mind out!' where Americans would say 'Look out!' or 'Watch out!' An American mother to warn

her child of danger might say 'Be careful!' or 'Look out!' while the English mother's warning may be simply 'Mind!' although she might use the American forms also.

English never uses 'mind' in the sense of 'to obey' as we do. 'She won't mind me at all' would be almost unintelligible to English ears, while to a Scottish listener it would mean 'She will not remember (recognize) me.' 'I mind your face well' is Scottish for 'I remember your face.'

We refer to a trained hospital nurse as a 'sister' only when that nurse is a nursing nun. In English (page 240), however, 'sister' is the title of a nurse of higher rank in the organization of a hospital or 'nursing home' than a mere 'nurse,' although both may be (and probably are) graduate, registered nurses of equal training. I recently slipped up badly by addressing a wedding present to the bride at 'the Nurses' Quarters' at the European hospital, when according to the rules I should have written 'The Sisters' Quarters'—and had the bad luck to be caught out in the mistake by my not altogether resigned husband, who maintained that by this time I should have learned enough English to have avoided such a faux pas. (However, I have not been struck off the bride's calling list as a result.)

Your note (page 239) that what we know in America as a 'slingshot' is the same lethal weapon that the English call a 'catapult' is true, but apparently our designation for this instrument of death is a misnomer. According to the English definition, a 'slingshot' is a short strap with strings at the ends from which the missile is thrown after a vigorous wind-up. Their 'catapults' (affectionately known by their owners as 'catties') are different but also villainous weapons made of forked sticks and pieces of elastic—in fact, the very things which Americans call 'slingshots.'

'Low gear' translated into English is usually 'bottom gear' or simply 'first' (page 237). I have never heard it called 'first speed.' 'Low,' 'middle,' and 'high' in American become in English 'bottom,' 'second,' and 'top.'

Many North Country Englishmen and Scots pronounce 'realize' and 'recognize' with the accent on the last syllable. If a speaker's accent is otherwise difficult to place geographically and he pronounces either word in this way, it is always a safe bet that he is Scottish.

One of the least attractive sounds in English to my ear (and on the whole I find it a very pleasant language to listen to) is the intrusive 'r,' which always interests me. Although it is not general by any means, people from all classes and from all parts of England may use it. The Scots never do, and with them it is always a point of criticism of English as it is spoken south of the border. To my great joy I often catch the BBC announcers using it ('the Ottawer Agreement,' for example). But to counter-balance

that, we once had a teacher in Hawley from Maine who said 'Eva-ris' for 'Eva is,' and I also once heard a visitor at a New York architects' and decorators' show say, 'There isn't a single floor in it,' for 'flaw.'

I dislike having to report that our six-year-old Alastair burst in from the playground the other day saying, 'Mummy! Do you *know?* I sore a big lorry smash into another one!'—and my only comforting thought was that the excitement of the crash may have been the excuse for the intruded 'r' in that case.

An old friend in St. Paul, originally from Leicestershire, always privately intrigued us by saying, 'I asked him to give it me,' or 'He gave it her,' whereas we ourselves and everyone else we knew would have said 'Give it to me' and 'He gave it to her.' I have never known the preposition 'to' in that construction to be omitted in American. Since leaving home I have found that although this English form is common it is not in general use, but all classes may use it.

The word 'friend,' in Scotland at least and perhaps only in the Highlands there, often means a cousin of sorts—a blood relation of distant or untraceable connection. In America we would call such a relative simply a 'distant' cousin. One can, of course, be friends with one's cousins even in America, but there the word never in itself denotes a blood relationship.

When one comes from north of Perth in Scotland (and perhaps not even so far north as that) the word 'though' is pronounced with the 'th' as in 'think.' The word as a whole is given a very short, abrupt sound, with no dragging of the last syllable into very nearly two as we and the English do. The 'th' sound is always especially noticeable. I have met northern Scots who have lived for years in America who still pronounce it in this Scottish way.

In Scotland and in parts of the North of England 'to sort' often means 'to repair' and is used as an American would use 'to fix.' 'I'll sort that lock for you' means 'I'll fix it for you.' Likewise, a Scot would say as a threat, 'I'll sort him!' exactly as an American would say, 'I'll fix him!' 'To sort' a house means to furnish or equip it, but this is a more unusual use. It may also mean 'to tidy up,' as 'I will sort the bedrooms for you.'

When we say, with our teeth chattering and our heads pulled down into our shoulders, 'I'm frozen' or 'I'm freezing,' the Scots and the North Country English say 'I'm starving' or 'I'm starving with the cold.' Webster says that this use is rare in the United States, but I have never heard it there at all.

'Yarn' in English is a term used to denote a mixture of cotton and wool in knitting and weaving. Our American 'yarn' *may* be a mixture

of cotton, silk or what-not with the wool, but the word does not itself immediately tell us that it is not pure wool. If one asks in an English shop for 'wool' the shop assistant ('clerk' to us) shows the customer without hesitation skeins of knitting material for socks, sweaters, etc. A clerk in a store in America would be puzzled to know what was meant by 'wool,' but would know at once what was required if the request was for 'yarn'!

What are known as 'sand shoes' or 'tackies' in English are the same articles which I still backslide into calling 'sneakers' (to the marked disapproval of Alastair goes without saying). 'Sneakers' would be complete Greek to English ears, and 'tackies' would mean nothing to Americans having no close association with English children. (Just at what stage an American sneaker becomes a tennis shoe I have no idea.)

An advanced degree in surgery in Britain—a Fellowship in the Royal College of Surgeons—paradoxically demotes a 'Doctor' to plain 'Mister' again. That is, a man will be 'Doctor Brown' before he passes his fellowship examinations, but after passing them he is known as 'Mister Brown,' and his colleagues in the profession and nurses in hospital are extremely scrupulous in using the new form of address, which is the sign and title of his advanced degree.

When the Scots move house they say they are 'flitting,' and the process itself is known as a 'flitting' (noun). The common English word for it is 'removal,' although 'flitting' is used in the North. In American, one simply 'moves.' (It is the same frightful upheaval in any language.)

Your note that American 'taffy' and English 'toffee' are one and the same article (page 235) is actually far from correct. English 'toffee' is more nearly what we call butter Scotch, and so far as I know, there is no sweet in Britain which requires 'pulling' as our taffy does. At least, I have never met an English child who has known the delight of blistering his hands stretching and pulling the dark sticky mass to the miraculous silver-gilt it is when ready to be twisted into ropes and looped on the kitchen table to harden. The English climate may be the bad fairy in this case, as it probably would never permit the taffy to dry sufficiently for cracking into suitable mouthfuls by a smack of the handle of the kitchen knife, which was the recognized method of cutting it up in Hawley.

Our 'pancakes' would be called 'drop scones' or simply 'scones' by nine out of ten in Britain and, whatever called, they would be eaten cold with the fingers, with butter and perhaps honey or jam at tea, never in a hot steaming pile four to six deep, swimming in melted butter and syrup as we in Hawley ate them (and as also did Little Black Sambo and his family after his contentions with the tigers).

British 'pancakes' are something else again—more like crêpes suzettes gone wrong and with the brandy sauce left out.

You mention the difference in feeling toward 'bloody' in the two languages, but you say nothing at all about 'bugger,' and I can't believe it is because your native delicacy forbade you to mention the word. As for 'bloody,' it still does not pass in mixed company in England without an apology, and a lady really does not use it.

However, if 'bloody' is unladylike in English, 'bugger' is far, far worse. In spite of Webster's qualification of its use as 'low,' in Hawley it simply was not recognized as a 'bad' word at all, and we grew up using it almost interchangeably with 'beggar.' I can't believe that Hawley had a blind spot about it, nor that elsewhere in America it was in any more doubtful repute.

During my first home leave from Africa the difference in the use of this word in English and American came up over a game of bridge one day. My husband and I were playing with my younger sister and a friend of hers, both University students at the time. The friend, an extremely pretty, wide-eyed blonde Swede, the picture of innocence, hesitated over a card and then played it, saying, 'Oh, well! I may as well play the bugger now as later!' Whereupon my husband, who knew American fairly well by that time but not sufficiently to take this in his stride, promptly collapsed over the table and proceeded to laugh himself almost out of a second-story window. Both girls were completely mystified, and no amount of explaining could make the joke anything but a very poor one to them—partly, of course, because they could not see their own dewy-eyed youth in the picture, but chiefly because they were highly indignant at such a foreign interpretation of what they considered a useful, innocuous, American word.

I have enjoyed getting all this down in black and white for you at last, and if there is anything new or of interest to you among the notes I shall be delighted.

There have been a few surprises for me and a great deal of amusement from the criticisms and comments of various English and Scottish friends who have checked the notes with me. On the whole, with regard to the differences I had listed, our findings showed that although the American way of saying things is fairly common in English, the purely English equivalent is completely foreign in American. I learned also that although my friends are no doubt pretty good at English and Scottish, their American is simply appalling!

EVA MACKINTOSH

Kampala, Uganda, East Africa

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S. N. Treviño
University of Chicago

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Phonograph records: New-World Spanish on RCA Victor Records.

A set of ten records and manual, prepared by H. G. Doyle and Francisco Aguilera. Price, $23.95.

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The author discusses the relationship between auditory and instrumental

analyses and concludes that the former must be made first because it is the only means of discovering what is perceptually significant in intonation. He finds that the chief characteristics of intonation are four pitch phonemes and four primary intonation contours. He examines the intonation graphs of some fifteen pages of sample dialogues to determine the position in the sentence and the frequency of occurrence of the four contours. The falling contour, distributed about equally between medial and final sentence position, represents over one-half of the total number of contours and is by far the most frequent. Suggestions for using the results in teaching intonation, particularly that of English to Latin Americans, and a nine-page bibliography are included.

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The physiological analyses of the pronunciation of contrasting pairs of words reported in this dissertation show that the Danish glottal stop is a ballistic stroke having three distinct phases and being accompanied by a characteristic decrease in the amplitude of the wave. It may be defined as 'a stress accent, a special marking movement made by a thrust-like emphasizing of sounds.'

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The α-phoneme is a definite energy which comes into play whenever a consonant and a vowel, or a vowel and a consonant (but not two vowels or two consonants), come together in connected speech. It blends gradually two such sounds and establishes their utterance-continuum. It explains diphthongs and 'for the first time' semi-vowels. It also emphasizes the discontinuity concept of speech phenomena. While the α-phoneme is conceived as a pure abstraction in the manner of Dedekind's postulate, the authors also term it 'a frequency continuum with density,' and suggest that 'its structure must be worked out experimentally.' Tabular results and illustrations.

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Statistical distribution of the reading pronunciation of the vowels in such pairs as *forest: horrid* revealed that [ɔ] predominates east of a curved line bulging towards the northwest and passing through New York, Indiana, and East Texas, while [ɑ] predominates west of the line. Tables and map.

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Consensus of fourteen competent speech teachers and phoneticians favored General American pronunciation and the alphabet used by Kenyon and Knott.

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Wyatt, R. F. Improvability of pitch discrimination. *Psych. Monographs*, 58: no. 2. 1945. v, 58 pp.
Training improved the pitch discrimination ability of eight music and eight non-music students.

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Using Hanley's word analysis of Joyce's *Ulysses*, the author finds that words repeated five times are evenly distributed in time. The rate of repetition of words in the stream of speech reveals personality and is further substantiation that 'the length of a word tends to be inversely related to its frequency of usage.'

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Comparisons of words sampled from Thorndike's list and their meanings show that the 'different meanings of a word will tend to be equal to the square root of its relative frequency.'

MISCELLANY

LOUISE POUND
University of Nebraska

THE CURRENT SUFFIXES

-ability

ROADABILITY. 1945 Winslow Ames, Cochocton, O., 14 Oct. Roadability, a favorite in automobile advertising, means the ability to hold the road.

-burger

BUFFALOBURGER. 1945 *American Notes & Queries,* July, p. 54. Buffaloburger; hamburger made of buffalo meat; popularized in New York City to help solve wartime meat shortages. Buffalo, as game, is not rationed.

TURTLEBURGER. 1940 Sergeant Harold V. Jones, Arlington, Va., 23 Oct., 1945 While in Florida Keys in the service in the Spring of 1940 I came across a road stand selling turtleburgers.

-cide

GENOCIDE. 1945 *Yorkshire Post* (Leeds) 20 Oct. The third count of the United Nations' indictment of the 24 Nazi leaders . . . states that all the prisoners 'conducted deliberate and systematic genocide —namely, the extermination of racial and national groups—against the civilian population of certain occupied territories so as to destroy particular races.' . . . Genocide was coined, apparently from the Greek genos, race or tribe and the Latin suffix cide, killing or killer by Professor Raphael Lemkin, of Duke University, United States, who is now in London. . . . Would not the homogeneous and much more easily understood compound genericide be preferable?

-ee

AMPUTEE, TRAINEE, DISCHARGEE, RETIREE. 1945 Westbrook Pegler in Washington *Times-Herald,* 3 Oct. How many amputees were there, General Bradley wanted to know, resorting to a ghastly form that has given us, also, trainees, dischargees and retirees.

DEMOBBEE. 1945 William Hickey, in London *Daily Express,* 22 Aug. A demobbee called yesterday with, for a change, no complaints. . . .—Private Roy Pugh, . . . now an old boy of Hatfield House, rehabilitation school for returned soldiers.

-eria

BOOKETERIA. 1945 Charles J. Lovell, Pasadena, Calif., 28 Oct. Pasadena Junior College has a booketeria.

CAFETERIA. 1945 H. W. Seaman, Norwich, 1 Oct. Woolworth introduced cafeterias to England. There is one for members in the House of Commons. I have encountered a cafelita in rural England.

DRESSETERIA. 1945 Dr. Atcheson L. Hench, University of Virginia, 27 Oct. Name of a section in Thalhimer's department-store, Richmond. The dresseteria is a three-sided section of the woman's clothing floor, and in it nothing but dresses are sold.

JOYERIA. 1945 H. Bartlett Wells, American Embassy, Havana, 18 Sept. The word is the common name for a jewelry establishment in the four Latin-American counties where I have been stationed. It appears, without comment as to origin or local uses, in the dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy.

ROSTICCERIA. 1945 John M. Owen, East Aurora, N.Y., 9 Nov. In Buffalo there is a restaurant named the Rosticceria. [*Cf.* Fr. rotisserie].

-eteer

BLACKETEER. 1945 Headline in New York *Daily News,* 13 Sept., p. 24 Discover 600 Blacketeers. [Described as racketeers who forged ration checks.]

-ette

GUIDETTE. 1945 *Metropolitan Host* (New York), 27 Oct., p. 20 Miss Joyce

Lester, N.B.C. guidette, starts a tour of N.B.C. studios with lots of support from the U.S. Navy.

PORTERETTE. 1945 *Baltimore & Ohio Magazine* (Baltimore), Oct., p. 5 The porter and porterette . . . are pleasant as they go about their work, and make the passenger feel they will do everything possible to make his trip . . . comfortable.

ROCKETTE. ? Sergeant Harold J. Jones, Arlington, Va., 23 Oct., 1945 Rockette is derived from the name of Rockefeller, the builder of Radio City. The dancers at the Roxy Theatre were known as Roxyettes.

SUPERETTE. 1945 *Coöperative Consumer* (Kansas City), 18 Sept., p. 6 Hundreds of superettes, small super food markets, will be opened in large cities in the near future. . . . The superette . . . will carry a complete line of food, including dry groceries, meat, dairy products, fish, fresh produce, frozen merchandise, baked goods and similar items. The customer will be able to do all of his shopping under one roof. The stores will vary from self-service to modified service.[1]

YEOMANETTE. *c.* 1917 Sergeant Harold J. Jones, Arlington, Va., 23 Oct., 1945 Two WAVE officers, stationed in Washington, say that the term was derived from the official designation: yeoman, F [i.e., female]. It soon slid into yeomanette.

-ist

JEWELIST. 1945 Advertisement in the Dallas (Texas) *Morning News,* 14 Oct.

RESERVATIONIST, SPACE CONTROLIST, PHONE COMMUNICATIONIST. 1945 Advertisement in Kansas City *Star,* 30 Oct. Airlines need young women. Be an air-line reservationist, hostess, phone communicationist, space controlist or ticketing specialist.

-ium

PLAYDIUM. 1945 Dr. Atcheson L. Hench, University of Virginia, 27 Oct. Playdium is the name of a bowling place in Richmond, Va.

-ogenic

IATROGENIC. 1945 Alfred Auerback and P. A. Gliebe in *Journal of the American Medical Association,* 29 Sept., p. 338, quoting R. D. Gillespie in *British Medical Journal,* Vol. II, 1944, p. 263 There is a chapter omitted from medical textbooks which might be headed iatrogenic (Gr. iatros, doctor) diseases, that is to say, diseases produced by doctors. [The paper of Auerback and Gliebe is entitled Iatrogenic Heart Disease.]

-olator

HEATOLATOR. 1945 Dr. Warren Weaver, New York City, 18 Oct. There is a device called a heatolator which is much used in Summer homes in the Northeast. It is a sheetiron form, with double walls, around which a fireplace is constructed. The air heated between the walls of the heatolator is discharged into the room or into adjoining rooms.

-orium

BATHETORIUM. 1945 Advertisement in *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), 23 May, p. 24 BATH ETORIUM [as two words] 415 14th—Massages, steams, rubs.

PANTATORIUM. 1901 Charles J. Lovell, Pasadena, Calif., 28 Oct., 1945 The first issue of Carry Nation's *Smasher's Mail,* published at Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, dated March 9, had an advertisement of the Topeka Pantatorium.

SLIMMATORIUM. 1945 Advertisement in *Beacon Hill Ledger and Back Bay Times* (Boston), Oct. The Alquist Reconditioning Salon, 177 Tremont street, is the lowest priced slimmatorium in the city.[2]

-ster

AGAINSTER. 1945 Editorial in Chicago *Times,* 25 Aug. The againsters have dragged out the old slogan: The full em-

1. Reported by Dr. Bower Aly, professor of speech at the University of Missouri.
2. Reported by John P. Nash, Boston, Oct. 11, 1945.

ployment bill would bring about a Government-managed national economy.

H. L. MENCKEN

Baltimore, Maryland

UNDERWORLD ETYMOLOGIES: SERIES THREE

One for the Book

When a friend approaches with an anecdote which is strange or incredible, he often prefaces it with the remark, 'Here's one for the book.' On questioning several lexicographers and philologists about the phrase, I found them either puzzled or tempted to explain it on the basis of a metaphorical assumption that one is collecting or noting down esoteric material. However, I now have reason to believe that the phrase comes from the argot of the racetrack gambler and is an elliptic form of *one for the end book.* At racetracks where parimutuel betting machines are not used (these tracks are dwindling in number) it was customary for bookmakers to line up in a designated area. A sort of order of seniority was observed, with each newcomer taking his place at the end of the line and working up. When a bookmaker was consulted by a bettor who wanter higher odds than the bookie could give without 'dutching' his book, he sometimes passed him on to a colleague who was giving better odds on that particular horse. If a bettor asked unusually high odds, the bookie might comment, 'Here's one for the end book,' implying that no one but a green newcomer, hard up for bets, would accept those odds. By extension it became an expression of skepticism when anyone told a tall tale, and is still so used within the fraternity. When it passed out of gambling circles, it became a useful but rather vague metaphor to outsiders, who dropped the meaningless *end,* while *book* tended to resume its conventional meaning in place of the previous one of 'bookmaker.'

Gun-Turn

When a faro dealer draws a pair of fives out of the tell-box, professional gamblers refer to the phenomenon as a *gun-turn.* The *gun* referred to here is not a firearm, but rather a pickpocket (derived from Yiddish *gonif,* thief) and the phrase is connected with pickpockets through an old thieves' saw which runs:

> . . . Two fives together
> What the mark had in his leather. . . .

and which means, 'The victim had two $5.00 bills in his wallet'—a circumstance which, I am told, occurs with distressing frequency. The compound is analogous to others made with *gun,* such as *gun-moll, gun-shirt, gun-mob,* etc., all of which are subject to varying and usually erroneous interpretation outside the underworld.

To Case

Not long ago, in a learned journal, Professor Dwight Bolinger listed this verb as a 'new word' and, flanked by 1941 citations from such authorities as *Dynamic Detective, Master Detective,* and *True Detective,* defined it thus: 'To study or

plan (a crime, especially the setting of a crime) so as to preclude accidents.' In the citations quoted, law-enforcement officers are supposed to be speaking, and perhaps the word means to them what Professor Bolinger says it does to him, but to criminals it means simply to look at, to watch, or to look over; by the very nature of things *casing* and 'planning a crime' can (except in very unusual circumstances) hardly be synonymous, for the casing of an individual, a place of business, the movements of payrolls or registered mail, etc., only supplies certain information which enables the mob to plan the crime. *Casing* is frequently done by men who do not participate directly in either the planning or the execution of the crime for the very good reason that no member of the mob wants to be seen near the scene of the crime before it is committed.

As a matter of fact, it is a very old word. I published it in 1931 in transcripts of criminal speech, but at that time considered it (perhaps wrongly) to be rather widely known and did not define it in the glossary. During the Prohibition era it came into circulation through the *heavy-rackets* and was in use on Broadway during the '20's; fictioneers since that time have employed it freely. Damon Runyon was using it at least twenty years ago.

Now for a note on the origin of the word. In faro-bank, the house keeps tab on the cards which have been drawn and played by means of a *case-keeper,* an employee—singularly often of solemn demeanor—who sits on a stool overlooking the lay-out (hence sometimes called a *hearse-driver*) and *keeps the cases.* That is, he has charge of the tabulator resembling an abacus (*case*) and keeps an eye on each player, the dealer, and the cards dealt, with a view to protecting the house from clever gentry who might cut into the 'legitimate percentage' which any house considers itself entitled to take. From the eagle-eyed vigilance of the monitorial *case-keeper* we get the verb *to case,* which means exactly what it implies, quotations from minions of the law in slick-paper magazines to the contrary notwithstanding. The same *case* is probably the source for such other combinations as *case-card* and *case-note.* An interesting parallel etymology for the same word (but deriving from a different source) can be traced through the argot of old-time river-boat thieves, who marked certain *cases* among the deck-cargo for heaving overboard to confederates at designated points. The two etymologies have no demonstrable connection.

D. H. MAURER
University of Louisville

WORDS IN -FU

Army slang in the past war was almost non-existent except for the efficient abbreviations common in any large American business. The only things that made our conversation confusing to civilians were CQ, OD, AR and other such letter names which did not have the poetic background of slang but were just symbols of the desire to

get the war over as quickly as possible. A few others were technical terms which did not differ in origin from those to be found in printing, railroading or any other specialized work.

One of the few words which became a definite addition to the military vocabulary was SNAFU, which gives indications of lasting as long as the American army. It began in a joke which was popular around army camps in the summer of 1942.

A private in the front was charged with the duty of sending reports back to the battalion CP (Command Post) by messenger, and he had been filling up page after page of the message book with inconsequential detail. Battalion instructed him to send only the rough outline of the situation and to use as many abbreviations as possible. The next message was the single word, 'SNAFU,' which was explained as 'Situation Normal. All (Fouled) Up.' My translation is, of course, not literal.

The mere sound of the word was intriguing. I saw it first on the back of a bench in an OCS classroom late in 1942 and put it into my conversation as a double-talk word before I knew its origin and meaning.

The meaning of SNAFU was especially pertinent to Army talk, as it offered a satirical summary of all that most of us objected to in military life—red tape, indecision, confusion over which no one seemed to have any control.

The word SNAFU led to others with the same vulgar root, but I would like to establish that none of the others really became part of Army language even for a short time. They were literary flights of fancy used for temporary effect, and usually had to be explained. SNAFU was in the active vocabulary of every soldier.

However, even though these other -FU words were merely temporary variations, they may be recorded as a demonstration of the power of the original. From my observation of Army talk, most of the words in the lists of our slang which appeared so frequently during the war were just such transient neologisms as these or words like 'shavetail' and 'brass hat' which date from the time when war was thrilling.

The second of the words in -FU was TARFU (Things Are Really FU), which was as generally known as any of the derivations. It followed so closely to SNAFU that it was used in another telling of the original joke.

Yank magazine in the spring of 1944 told of a squadron that was part Army, part Navy, part Marine and was scattered all over the Pacific doing practically every conceivable job that planes could perform. It was called the FUBAR squadron, explained in *Yank* as 'FU Beyond All Recognition.'

In the Central Pacific theater during the days of such Army-Navy combined operations at Kwajalein and the Marianas, some joint units were formed with titles abbreviated in JAN-, as JANSCO (Joint Army-Navy Signal Company). This al-

most cried for the word JANFU (Joint Army-Navy FU) which became fairly common in that theater, especially around the time of the Saipan operation.

The FU words never lost their amusement value for soldiers throughout the war. The final word came after V-J day, FUBIO. Its description of the post-war attitude was a variation on the root, and meant 'F— You, Bub, It's Over.'

The popularity of SNAFU was capitalized on by the Army in several ways. One of the issues of the *Army-Navy Screen Magazine,* a collection of short subjects for use in military theaters, included Carole Landis, Martha Raye and Mitzi Mayfair singing on their return from Europe a song 'What's the meaning of SNAFU?' The same series of shorts featured a set of instructive cartoons with a horrible example of a soldier called Private SNAFU.

One of the best uses was in a training film of the Fighting Man series put out by the Army Signal Corps. Titled 'SNAFU,' it explained that many of the confusions resulting from war depend on the actions of the enemy, the weather, and other imponderables which always cause a great deal of wasted effort in wartime.

SNAFU outgrew its vulgar beginnings and became a rather common word in magazines as the war progressed. In the Army it was even occasionally seen as a euphemism for the bawdy verbal phrase of the root in 'snafued.' A play with the word as a title opened in New York in the 1945 season, and at this writing the play is being made into a movie with the same title.

There is perhaps an optimistic conclusion to be drawn from the paucity of new slang and the one creative word that I have listed which came from the past war. They indicate that the men who fought in this war did not like it, felt completely lost in the enormity of mechanical combat, which leads us to hope that revulsion to modern war may have been a common enough emotion throughout the world to insure peace as long as it remains in the world's memory. SNAFU was an outcry of the individual's inadequacy to express itself against the collective chaos of today's war.

LT. JEFFERY A. FLEECE
U. S. Army

'AIRY' FOR 'AREA,' 'EYRIE,' 'ERA,' AND 'ARY'

The asterisk, long established in formal writing in the function of calling attention to a footnote, is also now widely accepted in informal contexts, such as display advertisements appearing in the press and in magazines of large circulation. There, however, the asterisked note that the eye seeks upon encountering the superior asterisk in the text is not, unfortunately, always readily found, since popularly there is no established convention that the note must be put at the foot of the page or in any other one specified place. Sometimes, in fact, there is no note whatever, but only the one asterisk in the text; and the

baffled reader can only speculate on the intention of the copywriter who has failed to hitch a footnote to his star.

It may be that the asterisk is the only scholarly symbol in universally popular use. Even so, I have only recently noticed its prim occurrence in the loose, uninhibited illiteracy of the comic-strip. Doubtless some devotee of this now dominant American art-form could supply other instances. In Fred Lasswell's syndicated 'Barney Google and Snuffy Smith' for October 27, 1945, a hillbillyess says, in a 'balloon' hovering over her head: 'I hear tell we-uns are teeterin' and totterin' on th' brink of a new airy, Paw.' An asterisk marks *airy,* and its footnote explains: 'Era.'

This leads me to mention some other meanings of (or given to) the dialectal *airy.* In the eighth stanza of 'A Letter' (*Biglow Papers,* I), Lowell wrote: 'They may talk o' Freedom's airy/ Tell they're pupple in the face.' The reader is free to interpret *airy* as he likes, so far as most textbook anthologists are concerned (*e.g.,* Quinn, Baugh, and Howe, 1929; Foerster, 1934; Snyder and Snyder, 1935; Warfel, Gabriel, and Williams, 1937; Benét and Pearson, 1938). But Jones and Leisy's *Major American Writers* (1935, 1945) explains *airy* as 'eyrie, as of an eagle' (p. 963, note), whereas Ellis, Pound, and Spohn's *A College Book of American Literature* (1940) says it means 'area' (p. 405, note). Why not, then, interpret *airy* as 'area,' 'eyrie,' 'era,' or something else? For one thing, the context rules out 'era'; and for another, twenty years after Lowell began writing the Biglow series, he published a glossary of its dialectal terms, among them *airy,* defined as 'area.'

The commonest use of *airy,* however, is for 'ary'—that is, 'any,' 'either,' etc. In tabulating the voluminous data on *ary* a few years ago, I found that *airy* is the second most frequent variant form of this word, which occurs in New England, the Northwest, and at least fifteen of the linguistically Southern states. Other forms are *air, arry, ery, aery, e'er, e'er a.*

HAROLD WENTWORTH
Temple University

SOME WORDS OF WAR AND PEACE FROM 1945

AIRHEAD. Territory seized by airborne troops, from which to build up other strong forces. 1945 Major General M. B. Ridgway in *Time* 7 May p. 6/3.

BAKA BOMB. A suicide rocket-bomb attack plane, a snubby-winged missile launched by a mother plane, with a pilot locked in the tiny cockpit. 1945 Malcolm Johnson in N. Y. *Sun* 19 May p. 8/5 Then a twin-engined Betty . . . suddenly banked in front of us and we saw an object drop from her side. . . . It looked like a great silver fish. . . . That was the Baka or piloted suicide bomb; 1945 *Time* 25 June p. 28/3 Japanese . . . have glorified it under the name *Jinrai* ('sudden peal of thunder'), but U. S. . . . men . . . tagged it with another Japanese term, *baka* ('stupid').

BONDADIERS. 'Victory Bondadiers'—a group of sixty secretaries organized as bond-selling teams. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 28 April p. 13/8.

CINCPOA. Commander in Chief Pacific Ocean Areas. 1945 N. Y. *Times Mag.* 3 June p. 10/2.

COMSUBSPAC. Commander, Submarines Pacific. 1945 N. Y. *Times Mag.* 3 June p. 10/2.

CVL. *Corpo Voluntari della Liberta* (Italian Committee of National Liberation). 1945 N. Y. *Times* 23 April p 3/1.

DP's. Displaced persons, former slave laborers in Germany. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 7 April p. 3/4.

FEAF. Far East Air Force. 1945 *Air Force* June p. 37/1.

FIDO. Fog Investigation and Dispersal Operation, an installation of horizontal pipes laid parallel to each side of an airplane landing strip. Gasoline forced through and out of the perforated pipes and ignited produces a wall of flame which burns off ground fog and thus permits planes to land. 1945 *Time* 11 June p. 56/2.

FIREBALL. A Japanese midget jet-propelled plane designed to ram Superfortresses. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 24 May p. 1/8 The Japanese sent up a new type of fighter on this attack, a 'fireball plane.' . . . In each case the 'Fireballs' were a dud.

FIRE ROE. A white powder added to gasoline which thickens or jellies the gasoline. 1945 David Dietz in N. Y. *World-Telegram* 22 May p. 14/2.

G-IVAN. A Russian GI. 1945 W. C. Heinz in N. Y. *Sun* 1 May p. 3/6.

GOOP. 'Synthetic lava,' the mixture in an incendiary bomb, a rubbery compound or pyrogel of powdered magnesium, liquid asphalt, jellied gasoline, and other oils. 1945 David Dietz in N. Y. *World-Telegram* 22 May p. 14/2 The name goop arose from its sticky character.

HAIS PIPELINE. One of the pipelines under the English Channel which supplied the AEF with gasoline, named from the initial letters of Hartley, chief engineer, and the Anglo-Iranian-Siemens Oil Co. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 24 May p. 5/2.

HAMEL PIPELINE. One of the pipelines under the English Channel which supplied the AEF with gasoline, named for Hammick, chief engineer of the Iraq Petroleum Co., and Ellis, chief oilfields engineer of the Burma Oil Co. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 24 May p. 5/2.

JEEP GIRLS. Chinese prostitutes who solicit GI's. 1945 *Time* 11 June p. 34/2-3 When Chinese girls dated U. S. soldiers, Chungking confused them with jeep girls who ply their trade with great zest and professional abandon.

JINRAI. See *Baka.* Piloted buzz-bombs. 1945. *Time* 11 June p. 33/2.

JOE BLOW BIOGRAPHIES. Write-ups of men in action sent to hometown newspapers. 1945 *Time* 11 April p. 74/2.

KRIEGIES. Americanization of *Kriegsgefangene,* a former POW. 1945 *Time* 11 June p. 20/2.

LITTLE FORTY-FIVE. See *Middle Power.* 1945 N. Y. Times 24 June §4 p. 1/1.

MIDDLE POWER. Journalese for all the small and middle-sized powers, 'The Little Forty,' who were represented at UNCIO, as distinguished from the 'Big Four.' 1945 *Time* 14 May p. 40/1.

MOCKUPS. Experimental working models. 1945 *Time* 21 May p. 70/3.

PARAFLY, PARATENT, PARATEPEE. A fly, tent, or tepee, respectively, made from the nylon salvaged from the parachute. 1945 *Air Force* February p. 61/3.

PIB. Protects, Insulates Batteries—a compound which is brushed or sprayed over spark plugs, battery terminals and exposed electrical parts of amphibious jeeps to make them impermeable by water. 1945 *Time* 4 June p. 74/2.

PURPLE HEART VALLEY. Cassino. 1945 N. Y. *World-Telegram* 19 April p. 2/6.

PWD. The Army's Psychological Warfare Division. 1945 *Time* 11 June p. 10/3.

RAMPS. Repatriated American Personnel. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 4 June p. 5/1.

SAARF TEAMS. Special Allied Airborne Reconnaissance Force teams parachuted into POW areas to bring supplies to prisoners or help get them out. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 22 May p. 5/5.

SHIVER MONEY. The pay of the Antwerp dock workers, who were being exposed to continuous attacks by V-bombs. 1945 Thomas L. Stokes in the N. Y. *World-Telegram* 9 April p. 13/2.

SMOKY JOES. Planes which drop smoke bombs and thus mark a target, a tech-

nique perfected by the Royal New Zealand Air Force to strengthen its attacks in jungle areas. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 7 April p. 6/2.

SNOWDROPS. MP's in white helmets, gloves, belts, and leggings. 1945 N. Y. *World-Telegram* 16 May p. 15/3 General Eisenhower said, 'I see some of my own snowdrops on the stage.'

USIS. U. S. Information Service, new name of OWI. 1945 N. Y. *World-Telegram* 18 April p. 27/1.

VENUS FIXERS. Allied Subcommission for Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives in Italy, which prepares the list of treasures to be spared. 1945 *Time* 16 April p. 63/1.

VIP. Army term for a Very Important Person. 1945 N. Y. *Times Mag.* 4 March p. 36.

VLR. Very Long Range bombers, of the B-29 type. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 3 June p. E3/2.

WEASELS. Tracked jeep-like vehicles capable of traveling in mud. 1945 *Time* 4 June p. 32/2; *ibid.*, 25 June p. 8/3.

ZIPPER SHIPS. Airplane cargo carriers, ZEC-2's, modified Liberty ships, which are designed to carry crated aircraft. 1945 N. Y. *Times* 17 June p. 27/3.

LILLIAN HERLANDS HORNSTEIN
New York University

APPOSITIVES APOSTROPHED

To the long-established 'King of England's throne' and 'Henry the Eighth's wives' may be added further citations like 'Athens, Ohio's, population is larger than Athens, Georgia's.' Now *Time,* September 25, 1944, p. 94, refers to the editor of *Zion's Herald* as 'pastor of Hyde Park, Mass.'s Methodist church.' (No comma after 'Mass.'s,' by the way.)[1]

CONRAD T. LOGAN
Madison College

ODD LOTS

When one is *discharged* from the Army or 'gets a *discharge,*' isn't the word accented on the first syllable, even by speakers who would accent the last syllable for other uses?

Mt. Riga, four miles from Millerton, Dutchess County, New York, has for generations been called *Raggy,* according to Earle McGill.

It is reported that the citizens of *Ghent,* Ohio, speak of the town as [dʒɛnt], and perhaps of themselves as ['dʒɛntʃənz].

In Philadelphia on Sansom Street hard by Independence Square is a bar called *Ye Colonial Tappe.*

According to William G. King of CBS, there was once and there may still be in Brooklyn Heights an apartment house called 'The Magdalene Arms.'

'BOLVERADE' FOR 'BOULEVARD'

One of the older and longer avenues in the industrial city of Hamilton in southwestern Ohio bears the name of East Avenue, lying as it does in what was once the eastern limits of the city. It is one of the two main arteries leading southward to Cincinnati, and in my boyhood days some thirty years ago its southern terminus marked the beginning of the paved streets that led into the city. For some reason or other, perhaps because of its width, it became known as 'the boulevard.'

Apparently this high-sounding

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1. For many other interesting examples see Josephine M. Burnham's 'Group Genitives,' *Am. Sp.,* 2: 84-85 (Nov. 1926).—L.P.

name was too difficult for many of the country folk and doubtless some of the city dwellers to pronounce correctly, and it became known to many people in our locality as 'the bolverade' (rhyming with 'made'). Although it was once widely used, I have seldom heard the word in recent years, and it will soon be a forgotten term unless recorded. I have never heard of the word's being used elsewhere, but it may well be in use somewhere. In any case, it is an interesting and perhaps unusual corruption of a word of fairly common use.

WM. MARION MILLER
Miami University,
Oxford, Ohio

'BUYORITY'

Has anyone noted the word *buyority?* It is used in the heading of a blank on which you agree to buy and make current payments on an article that you will receive when manufacture has been resumed.

PORTER G. PERRIN
Colgate University

SLANG

According to the point of view, slang and its analogues may be anything from a menace to a promise for the language. In any event, however, neither high hope nor abject apprehension as to their ultimate effects are justified. Such words should thus be philosophically regarded because the vast majority of them are highly transient. They are froth on the stream of language, some portion of which may settle and add to the main current, but the most of which is dissipated, leaving not a trace.

W. L. M.

'NORFOLK' AND 'NORFORK'

Many of the inhabitants of the city in northeast Nebraska entered on the maps as *Norfolk* pronounce the name as it is spelled, while many others, chiefly old timers, call it *Norfork.* Curiously, it is the latter speakers that have historical justification. Early immigrants from Wisconsin chose the north fork of the Elkhorn river for their place of settlement. When it came time to have a postoffice address, Sam Thatch decided that Norfork was the proper contraction of North Fork. Some educated postal authority felt that the members of the Nebraska community did not know how to spell and pronounce their 'imported name,' Norfolk, a name they had not fixed upon. Federal officialdom was sure it knew better than the local settlers and entered the name in its records as identical with that of the city in England. Older settlers continue to call their home Norfork, but more and more their pronunciation falls into disuse. The local newspaper, the *Norfolk News,* now throws its support on the side of the federal substitution.

J. R. K.
Lincoln, Nebraska

'HITLER WEATHER,' 'CONFERENCE WEATHER,' 'EARTHQUAKE WEATHER'

Frank Miles, overseas correspondent for *The American Legion,* described in the February 1945 issue

the disagreeable weather in Italy which the Allied armies called Hitler weather:

> After nearly four months of a dogged struggling in rain, fog, mud, sleet and snow with ever increasing snow, the Fifth and Eighth . . . in North Italy . . . *'Hitler weather,'* the GI's called it.

Conference weather was described by one of the contributors to *Utah, A Guide to the State,* published by the Federal Writers' Project in 1941. The annual conference of the Mormon Church is held near Easter, and only once in sixty-seven years had it failed to rain during the conference, the *Guide* reported.

Bret Harte wrote in *The Californian: Sketches of the Sixties* of the deceptively pleasant weather which was supposed to presage earthquakes. He observed:

> Yet it is a proof of the rarity of really pleasant weather in this climate, rather than of any logical acumen or scientific knowledge on the part of San Franciscans, that they invariably look with suspicion upon this atmospheric blandness, and . . . call it *'earthquake weather.'*

In some other parts of the country such days are called *weather breeders*—the weather which is bred being bad weather of course. This term is reported in 'A Wordlist from Missouri,' in the *Publication of the American Dialect Society,* No. 2 (November, 1944). I have heard it used in Nebraska. *Sugar weather* in New England and *crazy* weather in Arizona were commented on in *American Speech,* 19: 236 (October 1944).

M. J. M.

University of Nebraska

'PEANUT-ROW'

Peanut-row, apparently an unrecorded expression, was explained by a University of Nebraska student as referring to those in the front row at basketball games and other sports. Other students knew the expression and thought it neither new nor peculiar to Nebraska students. The *American Thesaurus of Slang* enters *peanut gallery,* meaning the top gallery in a theater. *Life* (May 15, 1945, p. 113) used the latter term in discussing a new French film: *'Les Enfants du Paradis* . . . gets its title from the ragged, irrepressible throng that occupies the "peanut gallery" (the French call it "paradise") of the old-fashioned French vaudeville theater.' *Peanut-row* may be derived from theatrical usage, but it seems to be the antithesis of *peanut gallery.*

ADDENDUM

To the terms defined in ' "Fighting-Hole Feet" and "Shelter Legs" ' (*American Speech,* February 1945, p. 77), *immersion foot* and *jungle rot* may be added. Neither seems to be included in the war glossaries, although the former name appears to have been in use since World War I. *Newsweek,* January 29, 1945, said of it: 'Seamen plunged for long hours in icy water are tortured by *immersion foot,* a painful condition which has puzzled medical men ever since the last war.' Captain H. E. Theiss wrote of *jungle rot* in a letter to *News and Views* of General Motors (February 1945, p. 32): '. . . many of the officers

and enlisted men have been evacuated to the States with *jungle rot.* I thought after spending so many months in the jungle that I was immune, but sure enough I did get it on my hands and they are in bad shape.'

'ADVISEMENT,' ET AL.

Is the suffix *-ment* experiencing a revival? General Hines, recently retired as head of the U. S. Veterans' Administration, used the word *advisement* in the sense of 'counsel'—a usage labeled archaic in the 1944 *New International Dictionary*—in a statement quoted in the *American Legion Monthly* (March 1945, p. 15): 'The Veterans' Administration is stressing the importance of sound *advisement* and guidance not only to disabled veterans. . . .'

Mr. Silas Bent, of Old Greenwich, Connecticut, registered his protest against *disillusionment* in the *Saturday Review of Literature* (April 7, 1945, p. 15). In a letter to the editor he wrote:

> If someone will explain to me how and why *disillusionment* means more than disillusion I promise to forgive Ralph Barton Perry, a favorite stylist of the *SRL,* for his persistent use of it. Yet he writes of Lincoln Steffens, 'the disillusioned muckraker'; he owed it to himself to say Mr. Steffens was *disillusionmented.*

Surprisement was used by Mr. Angelo Cohn of Minneapolis in a letter to the editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature* (May 5, 1945, p. 15), in which he commented on Mr. Bent's letter. It may be assumed that his intent was humorous. 'Sir: Do you share my surprisement at Mr. Bent's argufication about the "obsolescent past participle". . .?'

Recruitment is a term that has been used for several years past by some civilian agencies, particularly social welfare organizations, its usage probably derived from the military. It refers to an effort to get more employees or workers, both experienced and inexperienced, as in the following letter from the Douglas Aircraft Company Inc. (July 27, 1945):

> The material included with this letter describes the method by which information can be efficiently exchanged concerning the personnel requirements of other employers, and the availability of *recruitments* from this company.

Groupment is a field artillery term that may be coming into general use. Mr. William McGaffin, writing from Okinawa for the *Saturday Evening Post* (July 28, 1945), described *'groupment* Henderson, a mixed marine and army outfit specializing in counter-battery fire.'